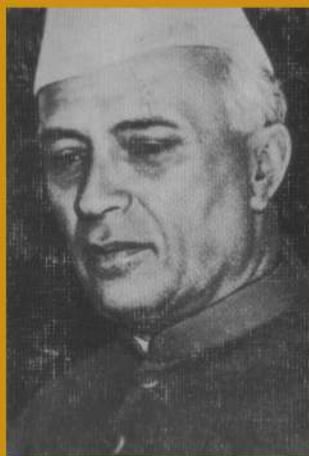


Rostislav Ulyanovsky



THREE LEADERS



Progress Publishers

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**Mohandas Karamchand
GANDHI**

Jawaharlal NEHRU

Indira GANDHI



**Progress Publishers
Moscow**

Translated from the Russian by *Nadezhda Burova*
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Ростислав Ульяновский
ТРИ ЛИДЕРА
МОХАНДАС КАРАМЧАНД ГАНДИ
ДЖАВАХАРЛАЛ НЕРУ
ИНДИРА ГАНДИ
На английском языке

© Политиздат, 1986

English translation © Progress Publishers 1990

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

УДК $\frac{0805000000-036}{014(01)-90}$ 41—90

ISBN 5-01-002007-6

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PREFACE

This book comprises essays on three leaders of the great Indian people. Two of the essays, one on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the other on Jawaharlal Nehru, have been previously published in the Soviet Union and abroad. For this edition, both essays have been extended to describe Mohandas Gandhi's active political struggle against racism and colonialism in South Africa early in this century and Jawaharlal Nehru's activity as a statesman following India's attainment of political independence.

The essay about Indira Gandhi was written shortly after her tragic death and published, though not in its present, full form, in the Soviet Union.

True patriots, Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi devoted their lives to the struggle against the British authorities, imperialism and colonialism, for a new, independent India. With Mohandas Gandhi entering the national scene of large-scale political struggle in the early 1920s, the essays describing the activities of the three Indian liberation movement leaders cover more than 65 years. This is a long period, even from the perspective of our quick-moving times marked by far-reaching changes in both national and international arenas.

Over the years in question the Soviet Union developed as a great socialist state; this was also the period when the Indian people's struggle against the 200-year-old British colonial rule grew ever more intensive to eventually culminate in the proclamation of India's independence. There is reason enough to say that the simultaneity of the progressive development of the two countries has not been accidental. The October Socialist Revolution (1917) and the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) were important factors in

bringing forth the victory of India's national liberation movement, whereas the more than 200-year-old struggle of the Indian people to achieve national independence and overthrow British colonial domination was a factor in the strengthening of the Soviet Union's and the entire socialist community's position in the international arena.

The three prominent public figures featured in this book were friends of the Soviet Union. Unlike Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Mohandas Gandhi was not a state leader and never visited the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, he was fully aware of the fact that the Soviet Union had demonstrated and would go on demonstrating its friendly support of the Indian people's liberation struggle. He spoke about it on many occasions.

In our time and day, the USSR and India are aligned in standing up against the increased danger of thermonuclear war and the arms race, working together towards complete elimination of colonialism, neocolonialism and racism. The relations between the Soviet and Indian peoples have evolved on the basis of sincere friendship, and the cooperation between the two nations is growing ever more varied and fruitful.

I hope that a book about people who played an important part in the history of the great Indian nation will be of interest to the readers.

Professor Rostislav Ulyanovsky

**MOHANDÁS KARAMCHAND
GANDHI**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the prominent leader of the Indian national liberation movement and the founder of the doctrine of Gandhism, was born on October 2, 1869 in the Gujarat principality of Porbandar. His world outlook was largely determined by his upbringing in a family that belonged to the Bania caste and strictly adhered to the religious precepts of Hinduism. His father held a ministerial position in various principalities of the Kathiawar peninsula.

Educated in England, Mohandas Gandhi first practised law in Bombay (between 1891 and 1893) and then (between 1893 and 1914) in South Africa as a legal adviser with a Gujarat trade company. While in South Africa, he led the struggle against race discrimination and the oppression of Indians. It was then that he first advocated Satyagraha, the tactics of non-violent resistance.

Upon his return to India in January 1915, he got increasingly closer with the Indian National Congress to become its member in 1919 and, later, one of its most prominent leaders.

Between 1919 and 1922, he headed India's mass national liberation movement. Speaking at numerous meetings and rallies he called for a non-violent struggle against British domination. Between 1923 and 1928 he called for the revival of home spinning and weaving, and the elimination of the institution of untouchability.

Between 1919 and 1947 he was the most influential political figure in the Indian National Congress. Under his ideological leadership it developed into a mass party and gained popular backing. The involvement of the masses in the national liberation movement was his major achievement. Tremendously popular with the people, he was called Mahatma, or Great Soul.

The years 1922-1924, 1930-1931, 1942-1944 saw him arrested and imprisoned. Both in prison and at large, he resorted to hunger strikes to protest against the British colonial rule.

In 1942 he advanced the "Quit India" slogan that matched the anti-British sentiment of the Indian public and was supported by the INC.

Since August 1947, when the division of the country into two states — India and Pakistan — was followed by Hindu-Moslem conflicts instigated by imperialist forces and domestic reactionaries, he persistently called for the unity of the Hindus and the Moslems.

On January 30, 1948 he was assassinated by Nathuram Godse, member of the Hindu chauvinist organisation Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh.

More than 40 years have elapsed since the assassination of the leader of the Indian anti-imperialist movement, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The years of the dramatic struggle to liberate the great nation from the colonial yoke are becoming part of increasingly remote history. The passions about the appraisal of the extraordinary — particularly in the European eye — and controversial figure of the "rebellious fakir", as Churchill, a vehement opponent of decolonisation, described Gandhi, have almost subsided. But there is a sustained interest in his ideological and political legacy, his role in Indian history, his view of India's past and future. For all the contradictions in his behaviour, he was a man of striking integrity. Less fiery nowadays, the debate around him is sure to continue for a long time to come. Gandhi is associated with a whole era in his country's history, the era when modern India and the people who until recently largely determined its image, were in the making. It is natural for all the political forces and all the schools of socio-political thought to strive to formulate their attitude towards Gandhi. The interpretation of his legacy is one of the important hallmarks of every political platform.

It has long been recognised that history is made by the masses. However it is the individual that becomes the historical symbol of the age. Mohandas Karamchand Gan-

dhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi have come to be part of historical symbolism inherent in the political consciousness and political life of the Indian people. The symbolism has spread beyond the boundaries of that country because Gandhi's and Nehru's activities and legacy feature many of the qualities typical of the age marked by the liberation of colonial and dependent countries from foreign oppression.

Gandhism, a set of political, moral, ethical and philosophical concepts advanced by M. K. Gandhi in the course of the Indian people national liberation struggle is a phenomenon associated, in national consciousness, with the many years of fighting for independence against British imperialist rule. Gandhism is also a factor in today's ideological, political and class struggles. This explains the importance of studying Gandhism, its actual content and historical role.

Mohandas Gandhi's distant ancestors were retail grocers. His grandfather and father, however, came to be ministers in tiny Gujarat principalities and the family prospered.

In the mid-19th century, Porbandar was a remote provincial town whose life was governed by ancient traditions. Jainism, India's most distinctly non-violent religion, was — and still is — predominant in Gujarat. Although Gandhi's parents belonged to the Vaishnava sect of Hinduism, they, too, were strongly influenced by Jainism. The family ardently observed all rites and traditions. As a child, Mohandas was engaged to be married three times. His first two fiancées died, and he was for the last time engaged at the age of seven. He was married at thirteen.

Just as many other young people, in his youth Gandhi was sceptical about the traditional way of life. The desire to escape Hindu conservatism prompted his decision to continue his education in England. The community saw it as a defiance of tradition, and the Bombay members of the Bania caste ostracised him.

From September 1889 to June 1891 Gandhi lived in London, studying law first with the Inner Temple and, since 1890, at the University of London. Here, after a brief period of absorption in the life of the metropolitan élite, he became nostalgic and drawn to Indian national traditions. Whatever reminded him about them in England attracted his attention — the vegetarian society,

Islam, Christianity and the theosophy of Elena Blavatskaya and Annie Besant. Theosophy made him interested in the sacred scripts of his own country.

Many of those from the colonies who came to London for an education embraced the metropolitan culture and lost touch with their native land and turned into foreigners in their own home countries. This was not the case with Gandhi: he never adopted the British mode of life and the liberal-bourgeois values and ways of the Victorian age. In London, the foundation for his negative attitude to "European civilisation" was laid.

In 1893, Gandhi left for South Africa. He became a legal adviser for a Gujarat trade firm. That year acts of race discrimination against the Indian émigrés became especially blatant. Gandhi placed himself at the head of the anti-racist movement that emerged in the Indian community. He called on his compatriots to resort to civil disobedience. The long and bitter struggle led to a compromise with the British authorities in South Africa. As a result, the position of the Indian émigrés somewhat improved. More importantly, participation in the movement taught them dignity and determination to defend their civil rights.

Gandhi had never intended to stay in South Africa long. However, he spent twenty years of his life there. This period proved to be of decisive importance for the formation of his character and views. It is while in South Africa that he fully appreciated his own country's humanitarian culture and traditions. It is there that he challenged race discrimination and inequality and his world outlook was shaped by his dedication to non-violence and high moral principles. Although in his spiritual quest Gandhi proceeded from the principles of Hinduism and Jainism, he also relied on what was consonant with them in Western culture which he continuously studied since his days in England. Particularly close to his heart were the ethical ideals of reformed Christianity free of dogmas and rites, the desire to turn away from bourgeois values and urban civilisation that isolate man from nature and to seek moral self-improvement in a natural environment. Hence his interest in Thomas Carlyle, Henry Thoreau and especially the great Russian writer Lev Tolstoy.

Gandhi's years in South Africa were marked by an

intensive search for an ethical ideal which, in his view, was to be associated with social and political activity. This was a continuation of the work he started in London, but here, among the members of an oppressed Indian community, Gandhi concentrated not only on the issue of personal spiritual development, but also on that of social injustice and ways to combat it. He was attracted by the struggle against oppression and despotism, no matter where and how it was waged, because reconciling with injustice was organically alien to him. In this connection, significant is his interest in and sympathy for the first Russian revolution. In his articles he wrote about the courage of Russian revolutionaries and their preparedness for resolute action. He was especially supportive of the general strike. "We, too, can resort to the Russian remedy against tyranny,"¹ he commented.

Although he was attracted by the revolutionary movement of the masses as a manifestation of fearlessness and commitment, in his personal quest he was inspired by the public stance of Lev Tolstoy. Gandhi's European friends encouraged his interest in the writings of the great humanist. He found Tolstoy's view of ethical and social issues to be strikingly consonant with his own and readily described himself as "a humble follower of that great teacher".² Following the example of the Indian patriots who had asked Tolstoy to express his solidarity with the Indian people oppressed by the British colonisers, on October 1, 1909, he sent him a letter describing the struggle waged by the Indians hit by race discrimination in Transvaal to assert their dignity by non-violent methods. He asked for the writer's permission to have his "Letter to a Hindoo" translated and circulated among them. In his reply, Tolstoy wished Gandhi every success and stressed the similarity of their principles. For Gandhi, Tolstoy's support was an important spiritual and ideological incentive. Throughout his life, Gandhi held Tolstoy in high esteem and remained grateful to him. Lenin had every reason to mention, in his plan for the unfinished "Notes of a Publicist", a "Hindu

¹ *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. V (1905-1906), The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi, 1961, p. 132.

² *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. X (November 1909-March 1911), 1963, p. 3.

Tolstoy-follower".¹ There can hardly be any doubt that he meant Gandhi. The activities of the latter attracted the attention of the founder of the world's first working people's state.

It goes without saying that there was a significant difference between Gandhi's and Tolstoy's views. This is primarily accounted for by their different areas of activity. Tolstoy was, above all, a writer and a moral philosopher, while Gandhi, a politician and public figure. Admittedly, Gandhi did a lot to adjust Tolstoy's individualistic, purely and classically personal doctrine to a public movement. This called for a noticeable shift in emphases and for an elaboration on Tolstoy's ideas. With Tolstoy, it is *non-resistance* to evil by violence, with Gandhi, it is non-violent *resistance*; Tolstoy seeks personal improvement, Gandhi adds to this personal influence exerted on other people in the course of mass, group or individual resistance. Tolstoy focuses on the general ideals of good and justice, while Gandhi stresses concrete political goals. But then, while Tolstoy's sublime abstraction² is clear and well-balanced, Gandhi's political activity is marked by repeated compromise and deviation from the ideal.

It was in South Africa that Gandhi's invincible mettle as a public figure first manifested itself. For him, moral improvement and social commitment were inseparable. Isolation, retirement into oneself and eternal self-contemplation were alien to him. Fighting against social and political injustice was part of his personal moral code.

Combining ethics and politics was Gandhi's life-long preoccupation. Although he did not deem it possible to tolerate evil, he thought it to be immoral and contrary to the sublime spiritual goal to resort to all available means in fighting it. He found a way out in introducing non-violence in politics through the elaboration of the theory and practice of non-violent resistance — Satyagraha that was first tested as a public movement in South Africa.

Gandhi developed into an outstanding politician and a great strategist of the Indian national liberation move-

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, pp. 504-505 (in Russian).

ment through paradoxically combining ethical idealism and political pragmatism. He first displayed the ability to do so while in South Africa.

Satyagraha means persistence in pursuing the truth. This brings into sharp focus its ethical and, to an extent, individual-oriented nature consonant with the traditional rules of "righteous behaviour" widespread among the Indians and sanctioned by India's main religions. What appears to suggest individualistic attitudes soon results in collectivism and involvement in a mass movement. Gandhi's call — to refuse to be unrighteous, never to compromise against one's conscience, never participate in or subjugate to injustice and be prepared to courageously face the consequences of your own righteous behaviour — invariably met with enthusiastic response of the people who were inclined to take part in public actions and felt that they were getting moral and religious support. They felt that their moral standards, challenged by the unjust social order, demanded that "truth-seekers" should turn into political fighters. By bridging the gaps between the individual and the public and between the ethical and the political Gandhi created an exceptional opportunity for the mobilisation of the masses. This opportunity was all the more practical because joining the Satyagraha did not call for special preparation, training or engagement in a conspiracy. All one needed was determination and avoidance of any support, even passive, to injustice. Satyagraha made it possible for everyone to immediately contribute to the common cause, to be drawn into politics and become politically conscious.

Satyagraha proved invaluable in a country with a population inexperienced in political struggles and divided by communal and caste barriers. It allowed for two forms of resistance — non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Non-cooperation involved refusing to work for the government, above all in the army and the police, boycotting elections to the colonial "representative" bodies, boycotting state schools, demonstratively refusing to accept state decorations and awards, resorting to arbitration instead of turning to official judicial bodies, boycotting imported goods, halting business activities, etc. Civil disobedience meant a direct defiance of the authorities and their laws. Satyagraha was preceded and accompanied by propaganda work. It envisaged increasingly

aggressive activity and eventual involvement of all means of resistance.

Those were applicable and effective methods of exerting pressure and stirring up and mobilising the masses. The right choice of the method of confrontation ensured mass participation in the resistance movement. Choosing the salt monopoly as the target of civil disobedience action as part of the 1930-1931 initiative was an appropriate move: the monopoly affected everyone and by breaking it everyone could become a fighter for independence.

Similar methods are widely used in all democratic movements, especially in their initial stages. Further on, the logic of resistance usually leads to a transition to more resolute forms of struggle.

The Gandhi approach was different in that he ruled out this transition, made an absolute of the non-violence principle, elevated it to the status of a religious dogma and turned it into an obstacle in developing other methods of struggle. Moreover, Gandhi failed to apply what was more aggressive about the Satyagraha itself. He was excessively cautious in making it more revolutionary. The non-payment of taxes plan for 1919-1922 was never put into practice. It was not until the late 1920s that it was resorted to in one of India's administrative territories. In general, as the promise of independence drew closer, the decline in the aggressiveness of Satyagraha became more obvious.

The first Satyagraha campaign (1919-1922) was probably the most powerful and promising one. Later on the revolutionary potential of the masses was intentionally checked. Since the 1930s and to the end of his life Gandhi never announced a single large-scale Satyagraha campaign. The 1942 resistance activity was limited in scope. Gandhi feared that control of the masses might be lost.

This was one of the distinctive features of Gandhi's Satyagraha. While relying on millions of people, Gandhi was not inclined to trust their initiative. He was the "commander-in-chief", the only leader and demanded that his plan be strictly adhered to without deviation or dissent. It was Gandhi alone who, without even consulting the INC leadership or any of his own closest associates, decided upon the commencement, form, plan

and termination of the resistance campaigns. While democratic in its content, the Satyagraha was not democratic in its leadership. It developed into a way of involving the masses in the INC policies.

There can be no doubt about the considerable revolutionary potential of non-violent resistance. However, not only did Gandhi keep it in check and prevent transition to more developed forms of struggle through relying exclusively on non-violence, but he also failed to use all the potential inherent in non-violent resistance. This reflected the course of the bourgeois core of the INC and permitted the hegemony of the national capital over the people's struggle for independence.

Satyagraha matched the limited goals of the Indian community in South Africa — ending race discrimination against ethnic Indians and attaining civil equality. The call to love one's enemy, not to take advantage of his misfortunes, etc., that Gandhi based on religious and ethical considerations, in fact mirrored the level of national consciousness of the day. National consciousness was not developed enough to prompt the demand for independence and the realisation of the imperative need to break away from the colonialists, that is to lead a decisive and uncompromising struggle against them. Gandhi dissuaded the Indians from aligning with the indigenous population, who were also fighting against colonial exploitation; moreover, he urged them to participate as he did, in the colonial wars waged by the British. Adhering to non-violence, he only served as an orderly. But wasn't cooperation with evil and colonial violence a rejection of this principle? The reason for his compromise is clear. Gandhi himself gave a realistic explanation — as the Indian community sought equality only within the framework of the Empire, it had to display loyalty to the Empire in all areas except those where Indians' interests were directly infringed upon.

In those days the Indian movement in South Africa was approximately on the same level as it was in India. Its complete programme envisaged the extension of self-government, and the rights and freedoms of the well-to-do classes. The movement was not yet mature enough to advance the idea of breaking up with colonialism. However, the logic of history was leading it in that direction and Gandhi, who was reputed in South Africa as a staunch

fighter, was to play the leading role in the further evolution of the movement.

The Indian National Congress, the country's first national organisation which set itself political goals, emerged in 1885. For nearly two decades it was a kind of a club whose membership consisted of Indian gentlemen, who, although loyal to the Empire, has become aware of the injustice of the British rule. They sincerely hoped to influence colonial policies in a way that would further India's progress. The INC's political activity in those days boiled down to petitioning for Indian equality.

The INC, the continent's earliest nationalistic organisation, was shaken by the Asian awakening which echoed the first Russian revolution. A group of radicals otherwise described as "extremists", entered the national arena. They realised that it was time to pass over from petitioning for reforms to fighting for self-determination. Headed by Balgangadhar Tilak, the radicals advocated participation of masses in the struggle as a measure to prevent its defeat. This revolutionary stand did not enjoy the uniform support of the INC members. Hence the party split into the moderates or liberals and the extremists. The reprisals against the Tilak faction, along with the activity of the liberals who opposed the extremists and were prepared to collaborate with the colonialists, brought about the defeat of the liberation movement at its first significant stage.

It was not until the First World War when the formerly opposed factions became reconciled (at the Lucknow Session of 1916) that the INC gradually emerged from a profound political crisis. Time and bitter experience brought the factions closer together. The "extremists" became aware of the colonialists' entrenched positions and of the need to take united and systematic steps to undermine them, whereas the moderates realised that without radicalisation and struggle, the INC was doomed to inglorious degradation.

There was a need for new ideas, organisational methods and forms of struggle. And those were offered by Gandhi who came back from South Africa in January 1915. He involved broad masses of the population in the movement. While calling to the resistance, he did not rule out negotiations with the British authorities and was prepared to compromise with them. He limited the

possibilities and forms of struggle to non-violence (*ahimsa*). The latter was to show the colonialists that the aim was not to destroy them, but to make them sympathise with the Indians, to understand their aspirations, and to urge the British authorities to observe certain rules of struggle. This essentially new strategy made it possible to unite the nation's forces in the opposition to the British rule.

What was novel and effective about Gandhi's approach was that he carried out his propaganda work among the masses rather than at INC sessions. His activity was not confined to the podium, but was conducted among the people in the street in rural and urban India. Between 1915 and 1918 he carried out four local Satyagraha campaigns. The first aimed at cancelling the customs procedures for third class passengers at Viramgam; the second was spearheaded against plantation owners and their abuses in Champaran; the third aimed at ensuring overtime pay for textile workers in Ahmedabad; the objective of the fourth was to gain tax reductions for the peasants hit by the crop failure in Khed. These campaigns brought hundreds of people into the public movement, got them interested in politics and helped to bridge the gap between the educated élite and the working classes. The whole country was hypnotised and enthused by Gandhi's bold actions which like a strong wind stirred up India's political life. Summing up his contemporaries' impressions, Jawaharlal Nehru said, "This was something very different from our noisy politics of condemnation and nothing else... This was the politics of action and not of talk."¹

The early successful experience in organising non-violent mass protest campaigns convinced Gandhi of the possibility of staging them on a nationwide scale. Between March 31 and April 6, 1919, the country was swept by a campaign for stopping all economic activity (*hartal*). Initiated by Gandhi, it signalled the patriots' response to the arbitrary rule of the colonial authorities, especially oppressive after the war. Scared by outbursts of vio-

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History Being Further Letters to His Daughter, Written in Prison, and Containing a Rambling Account of History for Young People*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964, p. 738.

lence, however, Gandhi terminated the campaign. From the *hartal* he learned that such action required careful preparation.

For all the peaceful intentions nurtured by Gandhi and most of the participants in the movement, the government retaliation was violent. On April 13, a demonstration staged on Jallianwala Bagh Square in Amritsar was fired upon. This shook the whole nation. The British showed their unwillingness to accept compromise. A new stage in the liberation movement, that of nationwide protest against British colonialists, began. To Gandhi's great credit, he was the first in the INC to hear the call of the time and recognise the need to tie up the Congress's fate with that of the mass movement. In his view, the bond could be ensured by non-cooperation with the colonial authorities and non-violent resistance. While involving millions of people and allowing them to vent their revolutionary energy, these measures were moderate and restricted enough to provide for the continuity of the INC's traditional liberal policies and left the door open for negotiation and compromise. Non-cooperation and civil disobedience presupposed a series of steps towards exerting increased pressure on the colonial authorities.

Gandhi carefully prepared for the protest campaign, seeking to rally the nation against British colonialism. To this end he supported the caliphal movement of Indian Moslems, brought into existence by the concern over the fate of Turkey, which had been defeated in the war, and that of the Turkish Sultan as the religious leader, caliph, of all followers of Islam. The religious movement reflected the anti-British sentiments of the Indian Moslems. Gandhi accepted the main demands put forward by the Caliphatists, and thus recruited their support for the forthcoming Satyagraha campaign. Thus, at the very outset of the Gandhian period in the liberation movement, its leader realised that the success of the anti-imperialist struggle and the power and well-being of the future independent India can only be ensured by the unity, mutual understanding and cooperation of the country's religious communities and ethnic groups. By ensuring interaction between the two largest religious communities he created the necessary conditions for the anti-imperialist struggle. Despite the provocations that

were staged by the communalist reactionaries encouraged by British administration and that often ended in disaster, Gandhi courageously adhered to this noble approach until the end of his days.

The first national non-cooperation campaign began on August 1, 1920. Gandhi called upon the Indian people to boycott the colonial administration, schools and British goods, to refuse jobs with government bodies and reject state decorations and awards. The nationwide refusal to pay taxes was seen as the most decisive measure. However, initially postponed until special orders from the INC leadership, it was never resorted to.

Just as was the case with the 1919 *hartal*, Gandhi launched the movement irrespective of the Congress. The "old guard" continued to fear that Satyagraha might lead to the spread of Bolshevism in the country. However, at the September 1920 INC session in Calcutta the liberal opposition was done away with.

The Calcutta Session showed that the INC had been considerably renovated. This was also confirmed by the INC annual session held in Nagpur in December 1920. Now the INC's proclaimed goal was no longer the establishment of self-government within the Empire, but the achievement of Svaraj interpreted as self-government within the Empire if that proved possible and without the Empire if that proved necessary.

The Congress was taking on a clear-cut organisational structure designed to transform it into effective, well-disciplined mass organisation involving thousands upon thousands of peasants, workers, and representatives of the national intelligentsia and lower middle-class. All of them were attracted to politics for the first time thanks to the Gandhian campaigns.

The INC proclaimed non-cooperation and civil disobedience as the basic principles underlying their political activity.

All these changes were due to Gandhi's ideas, activities and methods. The INC and the entire Indian people now had a leader enjoying unparalleled popularity and authority.

The upswing of the struggle inspired the masses. The movement swept the country. The elections to the provincial constituent assemblies in connection with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were disrupted. Strikes and

peasant discontent flared up everywhere. In the heat of the struggle the participants sometimes violated the principles of non-violence.

At the INC session held at Nagpur in December 1920, Gandhi promised the people to achieve Svaraj within a year. However, non-cooperation had been launched more than a year ago, all the envisioned steps except the non-payment of taxes had been taken but the government did not show any signs of weakness or indecision. Reprisals were carried on at an unprecedented scale and the well-adjusted machinery of repression was running at full speed.

Gandhi's hopes were not realised. The authorities refused to make even a token compromise. As a last resort, Gandhi could only call for the non-payment of taxes. However, fearful of the excessive revolutionarisation of the masses and the INC losing control over them, in February 1922, Gandhi decided to terminate the non-cooperation campaign. The pretext was offered by the burning down of a police precinct in the village of Chauri Chaura and the death of several policemen.

All other INC leaders being in prison at that time, Gandhi alone was left to make the decision. The British rule did not collapse under the first challenge of Satyagraha. The national forces were depressed, disappointed and demoralised. Charged with instigating a riot, Gandhi was thrown into prison.

When Gandhi was released from prison in 1924 due to illness, the liberation movement was experiencing a decline. All that had been achieved back in 1919-1922 seemed to have vanished without a trace. Belief in Satyagraha was undermined. The Svaraj group that had emerged within the INC advocated a return to cooperation with the colonialists and participation in representative bodies which, in fact, had no rights at all. Another group, "opponents of the change", insisted on carrying on with the tactics of non-cooperation, without, however, suggesting any effective programme of action. Although Gandhi ranked himself with the latter group, he did not consider the policy of the Svaraj faction to be a betrayal of the INC ideology, even though they rejected the non-cooperation principle and were prepared to accept the dominion status for India.

The worsening of relations between the Hindus and

the Moslems was still more alarming. When the liberation movement was on the rise, they forgot their differences and fought the common enemy together. But when the movement started to falter, the chauvinist and communalist sentiments stirred up by the authorities were revived.

Gandhi realised that it was imperative to build up the forces of Satyagraha. He put politics aside and devoted all his efforts to restoring healthy relations among the communities and to what he called constructive work — the education of the people in the spirit of unity, mutual assistance and non-violence. Meanwhile, the Svarajists started to dominate the political arena more and more.

It was not until the late 1920s that a revival in the national forces started to take shape. The INC left-wingers headed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose drew radical conclusions from the defeat of the 1919-1922 Satyagraha campaign and became ever more active in the party. At the Madras Session of the INC in 1927 they successively pushed through with Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution which proclaimed the achievement of India's full national independence as the main goal of the struggle. Although Gandhi was not supportive of this resolution, he did not interfere in the work of the Madras Session. At the so-called interparty conference held the next year, the right-wing members of the Congress countered this resolution with the Motilal Nehru's report which expressed their preparedness to accept the dominion status. In response, the supporters of full independence, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, set up in November 1928 the Independence for India League with the objective of urging the INC to do everything possible, even resorting to non-violent resistance, to implement the resolution of the Madras Session.

Gandhi proposed a platform of compromise. Recognising India's independence as the INC's ultimate goal, he committed himself not to call the people to non-cooperation within two years and to be content with the British authorities implementing, within that term, the reforms set forth in Motilal Nehru's report. This plan was approved at the INC annual session held in Calcutta in December 1928. All the left-wingers managed to do was to cut the period of delay to one year. By the end of the term, however, India was not granted self-government.

The intransigence of the British compelled Gandhi and

the INC to make another attempt to put pressure on the authorities. The nationwide Satyagraha campaign was launched in March 1930. This time Gandhi persuaded his compatriots to come out against the salt monopoly of the British colonialists. Together with his associates, he made a twenty-four day long walk to the sea. On their call, large numbers of people began to make salt by evaporating sea water to undermine the British monopoly on salt extraction. The entire nation was mobilised to the campaign and demonstrated rare unanimity in disobeying the British rulers. The people's resistance could not be broken by reprisals. Yet, just as was the case in 1922, the colonialists were not willing to capitulate. Once again Gandhi was facing the dilemma either to burn all the bridges behind him and launch the non-payment of taxes campaign bound to exacerbate the struggle or to put up with defeat again. Gandhi opted for the latter alternative. This time his pretext for suspending the campaign was the suggestion by the British to negotiate for India's self-government. The negotiations which took place in London could not and did not lead to any constructive result as they were especially designed by the British to downplay the people's struggle and to prepare to suppress it once and for all.

The pact concluded by Gandhi and the Viceroy Lord Irwin on March 5, 1931 failed even to mention the self-government status. In fact it sounded the finale of the second nationwide Satyagraha campaign. When Gandhi tried to revive it after the failure of the negotiations, the enthusiasm of the people had already waned; the campaign was slack and merely symbolic, and the authorities snuffed it out in no time.

This time, too, Gandhi did not take the risk of unfolding the campaign in full fearing that it would go beyond the limits of non-violence. Just as was the case in 1922, Satyagraha at its radical and acute stage brought about by the stalwart obstinacy of the colonialists threatened to go beyond the INC's control. The masses could, at any time, pass over to independent spontaneous action. The well-organised non-violent non-cooperation that accrued hegemony for the INC could evolve into a popular revolution with all the methods and social goals befitting it. Whereas Satyagraha, with the accurately dosed-out resistance, was the maximum of revolu-

tionary activity the Indian national bourgeoisie (which ran the INC) was prepared to tolerate.

When the second national non-violent resistance campaign was over, the situation in the INC was similar to that of the late 1920's. There again emerged differences between the supporters of parliamentary action and the advocates of civil disobedience. The official termination of non-cooperation in 1934 predetermined the outcome of the wrangling between them in the coming years. Not only did the INC participate in the Parliamentary elections under Viceroy and in accordance with the 1935 Government of India Act granting the country a limited and actually fictitious autonomy, but also agreed to form governments in the provinces. Just as was the case in 1924, Gandhi was preoccupied with his constructive work advocating home spinning and weaving. He also spent much of his energy fighting for the equal rights of the untouchables. This was particularly important for the strengthening of the national unity hated and feared by the British authorities. They fought the efforts towards unity by using the curial election system based on religion and caste. In order to stress his retreat from political activity, Gandhi even left the INC for a while. However, this did not prevent him from remaining the INC's actual leader. Without directly associating himself with any of its factions, Gandhi set a clear-cut course towards ensuring the unity of the Congress and reserving the dominant position in it for the moderate, reformist circles.

In the 1930s the differences on tactical issues resulted in a rather explicit division of the Congress into the Left and Right. The young in the INC, whose disappointment with Gandhi's methods was enhanced by the defeat of the second nationwide Satyagraha campaign, fought to dispel the parliamentary illusions of the "old guard" and called for the urgent and decisive attack against the colonialists. Their revolutionary spirit was also manifested in their understanding of the tasks of the national movement. They would only agree to full independence and establishment of social justice. As the liberation struggle grew more democratic, involving an increasing number of peasants, workers, professionals and students, the left-wingers rose in their popularity. They were headed by the highly reputed national leaders

Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose.

The weakness of the new trends within the INC lay in their lack of unity, factionalism, ideological diversity and mutual suspicion. Nonetheless, they were united in the drive to radicalise the Congress.

The left-wingers' growing activity worried the Congress's moderates and conservatives unwilling to share power with "go-getters" who sought to keep the INC within the framework of legal forms of struggle which at times alternated with the non-violent manifestations of protest.

Gandhi adhered to a different stand. He realised that it was only natural for new trends in the liberation movement to emerge, he welcomed the enthusiasm and determination of the young Congress members and their contribution to the national liberation movement. Gandhi sought to avoid a split. He proposed that Jawaharlal Nehru be elected chairman of the Congress. With Gandhi's consent, as early as 1931 at the INC Karachi Session, a resolution was adopted on the goals, basic rights, economic and social changes. This resolution, moved by Jawaharlal Nehru, stressed the need to end poverty and the exploitation of the masses, create a public sector, introduce the planning of and control over economic activity. The National Planning Committee was put in charge of studying the prospects for economic development.

Gandhi's policy of retaining the left-wingers in the INC matched the need to strengthen national unity in the struggle against imperialism. For Gandhi, however, the principle underlying this unity consisted in reserving the leading position for the traditional Congress circles which were becoming increasingly right-wing as the liberation movement developed. Gandhi deemed it necessary to provide them with every opportunity to rely on the policy of cooperation and negotiation. The expression of his sympathy with the Left was of propaganda importance. And in all the cardinal issues of current politics — agrarian relations, proposals on the collective membership of peasants' and workers' organisations in the INC, support to the democratic movement in principalities, participation in elections and, later, in forming provincial governments — he tended to side with the Right. When in 1939 the conflict between the Left and the Right became exacerbated due to

the repeated election of Bose, chairman of the INC and his plan of actions under which the compromise tactics were to be replaced by mass civil disobedience, Gandhi's interference compelled the INC, at its session in Tripura, to choose between the Bose policy and the Gandhi line. In essence, at that point Gandhi sided with the Right. Bose had to resign and the left-wingers in the Congress suffered substantial moral and political losses.

The Second World War gave rise to the hope that the difficulties experienced by Great Britain would compel it to make concessions as regards British colonies. These hopes were soon dispelled. Churchill said that he headed the War Cabinet not in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. The resolution adopted by the INC on August 8, 1942 and entitled "Quit India" demanded that India's freedom should be immediately recognised. It sanctioned the commencement of the mass non-violent struggle. In fact, it was an act of despair, a decent gesture, an attempt to find a way out not so much of a political as a moral impasse, rather than a political action designed to yield practical results. The movement failed to be launched on an appropriate scale. The INC was banned and its leaders were cast into prison.

It was not until the end of the Second World War, when the defeat of Nazism, the upsurge in universal democratic sentiment, the tremendous growth of the Soviet Union's influence and the emergence of the world socialist system created an entirely new international situation, the new British government (Churchill's War Cabinet was replaced by Labour government) arrived at the conclusion that it was time to recognise India's sovereignty. There was no room for procrastination. The entire nation was set in motion. Since 1945 India was swept by peasant uprisings, strikes and mass demonstrations. The working class in major industrial centres was particularly active. In February 1946 the Indian naval mutiny was supported by strikes, rallies and demonstrations held under anti-imperialist slogans in many cities. The masses no longer waited for instructions from Gandhi or the Congress. They began to act on their own, using their own methods and were not afraid of violating the principles of *ahimsa*.

It was precisely the mass anti-British actions organised without the INC participation, which never dared to resort to civil disobedience after the war, and largely against

the INC will, that compelled London to realise the advantages of the tactics of negotiations and pressure conducted by the Congress and to agree to enter into serious talks with it.

However, at a time when independence seemed to have drawn near, the colonialists resorted to their last weapon, the one they had been working on for a long time and particularly intensively during the war. Putting at stake the unity of India and supporting the separatist tendencies of the Moslem League, they declared that they would not be able to leave the country until the two major religious communities agreed on the future of the nation. Claiming the role of both the arbiter and reconciler of the opposed sides, the British authorities gave the leaders of the Moslem League, who welcomed the split, to understand that the creation of a Moslem state on India's territory solely depended on their determination. The advocates of setting up the state of Pakistan were prepared to go to any length to achieve their goals. They passed over from a political game to the so-called direct actions provoking an unprecedented in India's history Hindu-Moslem clash that cost thousands upon thousands of people their lives.

The INC leaders failed to oppose the joint action of the Moslem League and the British authorities who viewed the split and weakening of India as the best way of tying it up with the centre of the Empire. Exhausted by the struggle and seeking to obtain power as soon as possible, the Congress slowly but surely moved towards the decision on setting up two dominions on Indian territory.

Gandhi was the only Congress leader who until the very end considered this decision to be wrong, and sought to avoid it. He elaborated brilliant — from the tactical point of view — compromise plans that frustrated British diplomatic ploys designed to pressurise the INC into dividing the country. Gandhi's approach was clear-cut and principled — the future of India and the fate of Pakistan were to be decided upon in a context of independence, without British interference. The people and religious communities of India were able, he was sure, to find the best possible solution to their problems. But this inevitably prolonged the struggle, while Gandhi's colleagues in the INC were impatient to end it. He felt that the Congress leaders would not follow him. It was for the first time

since he became the leader of the Congress that his authority among the INC leaders was questioned. He was leaving the arena of active political struggle, turning into a figure-head. Most important decisions were adopted without his participation.

Gandhi was living through the hardest days of his life. He could see that his comrades-in-arms who had been at his side during the three decades of struggle no longer shared his views and strove for power and lucrative positions in the state machinery. The moral degradation of the INC that was so painful for Gandhi started to manifest itself at the final stage of the negotiations on granting India independence.

Having practically withdrawn from the talks which were to determine India's future, Gandhi devoted himself to combating the strife among the communities. Supported by a handful of associates, he mobilised public opinion, won over to his side the representatives of administration and communities, addressed the communities and resorted to hunger strikes as a means to urge an end to disorder. His security was threatened. Among the manifestations of hostility was the raid of his Calcutta home. His personal qualities secured for him both a special place in Indian policy and the love and respect of millions of compatriots who admired his selflessness, staunchness, and readiness for self-sacrifice, his oneness with the people and preparedness to help the suffering ones. This is the kind of person Mahatma was since his first campaigns to improve the life of India's working people (1915-1918) to the last days of his life. Absorbed in the struggle to eliminate inter-communal conflicts and immersed in the grievous thoughts about India's near future and the stand to take under new conditions, Gandhi was hardly able to rejoice about India's independence, the goal he had been striving after throughout his life.

On January 30, 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by a fanatical Hindu, member of the chauvinist organisation Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. The reactionaries were taking their revenge on the person who challenged their narrow-mindedness and who stood up for the unity and equal rights of all the religious communities and ethnic groups in India.

Two weeks after his death the newspaper *Harijan* published a document that had gone down to history

under the title "His Last Will and Testament".¹ Gandhi wrote it on the last day of his life. Setting forth his view of the Congress, he stated that as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary mechanism it had become outdated. He proposed that it should be disbanded and then re-established as an Association for the Service of the People (Lok Sevak Sangh). Explaining his point of view, he said that India was yet to reach social, moral and economic independence as understood by the 700,000 Indian villages. Gandhi was not defeated, and he was able to see the frontiers to be reached. What he placed high on the agenda now was the attainment of social justice. Previously, he postponed it until the gaining of independence. At his age of 78 Gandhi was prepared to part ways with those who had been his comrades-in-arms for many years because their goals and principles had become different. He was prepared to start anew with those who retained their belief in *ahimsa* and Sarvodaya. This reminds of Gandhi's spiritual teacher, Lev Tolstoy, who left his home in Yasnaya Polyana as a gesture in defence of his ethic principles.

* * *

Gandhi developed as a thinker and public figure in the late 19th-early 20th century.

This was a time when India, dominated by the apparently unbreakable British Empire, was turning into a site of national liberation movement. Already in those days observed in the movement were two principal trends — a liberal trend, mainly associated with the upper crust of the propertied classes then embarking on the road of bourgeois development, and a radical nationalistic, democratic trend reflecting the nascent popular protest against foreign oppression. The emergent national bourgeoisie, too, was opposed to national enslavement.

The more progressive leaders of the national liberation movement called for a resolute struggle against the colonial rule thus expressing the lower classes' growing indignation with the medieval social oppression, the enslavement of the poor by the landlords and money-lenders and the barbaric exploitation of the workers in the

¹ See: M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, Vol. II, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1949, p. 392.

then emergent capitalist industries. Their democratic aspirations, however, were usually limited to the bourgeois nationalism of an oppressed nation. It concealed contradictions among the classes and generated, at best, a striving for social compromise.

In those years India featured a rise in national self-consciousness and exacerbation of social contradictions against a background of developing bourgeois relations, crumbling patriarchal values and attitudes and mass impoverishment of the peasantry under the pressure of foreign capital and all-penetrating local capital. A protest against national and feudal oppression was brewing. In this context, Indian intellectuals, now familiar not only with the philosophy of the Enlightenment and liberal-bourgeois social thought, but also with the critique of bourgeois society, gravitated, in their ideological quest, to democracy and aspired to build a society free from exploitation and oppression. However, the ideas advocated by the progressive national public figures remained purely utopian.

The Gandhian concepts of Sarvodaya, the welfare of all, and Satyagraha, a way to achieve a society of universal welfare, are traceable to the Indian peasant traditions.

Gandhi's social ideal is a petty bourgeois, peasant Utopia, the establishment of God's Kingdom on Earth. In his view, the assertion of social justice meant a return to the golden age of closed, self-sufficient peasant communities and the rejection of European machine civilisation based on a market economy which he resented as something hostile to the patriarchal village life. As he saw it, market relations doomed the peasant-artisan community to degradation and perdition.

Gandhi's concept of Sarvodaya reflected the constant longing of the peasants, the village artisans, the urban poor and the common civil servants, suppressed by foreign rulers, national feudal lords, merchants and usurers, for the society so beautifully and attractively described in the sacred Hindu books. The longing for such a society is reflected in the cultural and historical monuments and the vestiges of tribal and patriarchal traditions of various peoples of India. These traditions are rooted in the mental framework shaped by Hinduism which forms the basis of the social psychology of millions upon millions of peasants, artisans and common townfolk.

At the same time, however, Sarvodaya symbolises a natural and sincere protest against the capitalist way of life by those social groups that are not yet aware of scientific ways of achieving a just society, that look for, but are unable to find, ways to escape from the unbearable social and material living conditions they live in. This protest reflects the great pain of tens of millions of people oppressed by the shameful caste system and practically enslaved by the landlords and money-lenders. They are not yet aware of their condition and therefore cannot understand that the way out lies in establishing a close alliance with the revolutionary working class, brought into existence by the hateful "European" capitalist civilisation. Gandhism does not recognise that this civilisation is inevitable and progressive in comparison with all the preceding societies. Thereby it encourages the Indian peasants and artisans to indulge in wistful reminiscences of bygone and apparently idealised primitive forms of social life.

However, for all its obviously utopian and archaic nature, the Gandhian ideal of Sarvodaya had an objectively positive effect on the Indian national liberation movement. It inspired the masses in towns and villages with the belief that the struggle for independence against the British rule was their duty because it was also a struggle for social justice and a society based on the principles they were striving for. Gandhi sincerely did not distinguish between the struggle against the colonialists and the struggle for Sarvodaya.

India's gaining independence in 1947 and the abolition of the imperialists' domination was a historic victory of the Indian people. This victory is associated with Gandhi and he justly deserved every respect. However, independence did not bring about Sarvodaya.

Non-violent resistance to colonial oppression was based on Indian spiritual tradition and the psychology of the Indian peasant. Just like Gandhi's social ideal, it is a combination of great patience, protest, conservatism and spontaneous rebellion typical of the Indian peasant with his traditionally fatalistic religious world outlook.

These characteristics of Gandhism also manifest themselves in the doctrine of Swadeshi. In all its aspects — religious, political, economic — Swadeshi is based on the drive to preserve the traditional institutions and customs

and to gradually and non-violently infuse them with a new content. This drive mirrors the profound dissatisfaction with the present, the unshakeable belief in the past, the rejection of all prospects except for a return to the past and the fear of radical change. All these are classic characteristics of the psychology of the peasantry in a context where the vestiges of traditional society still have a great impact not so much on actual economic life as on people's mentality.

Loyalty to the national, cultural, historical and religious traditions, the reliance on slogans, mottoes, memories and images close to the hearts of peasants and artisans, the ability to demonstrate that their spiritual life is directly linked to their country's attaining independence and social change are the strong points of Gandhism as ideology and political practice. This loyalty to the people's traditions and concept of a just life accounts for the tremendous influence of Gandhi's personality and ideas on the Indian nation.

There is sufficient ground to describe Gandhism as a profoundly national and essentially petty-bourgeois ideology.

This interpretation of Gandhism is probably not entirely irrefutable. Credit should be given to the Marxist researchers who revealed its close link to the interests of the Indian national bourgeoisie who used the ideology and practice of Gandhism to promote their class goals. Marxist scholars stressed that the connection between the national bourgeoisie and Gandhism was far more complicated than was usually considered, at least it was not entirely obvious.

The greatest paradox of Gandhism lies in the fact that while sharing the patriarchal peasants' dream about the golden age, Gandhi did nothing to make it come true. Moreover, he insisted that the solution of the agrarian question should be postponed until the attainment of independence. Owing to his exclusive influence among the masses, he largely assisted the bourgeois leadership of the national liberation movement in doing so. In fact, the dreams about Sarvodaya and the focus on non-violence served the same goal.

An analysis of the course and character of the Indian people's national struggle in the years between 1918 and 1947, when Gandhism enjoyed almost undivided political

and organisational influence, reveals a very curious and important fact: over more than thirty years in question, the Indian national bourgeoisie kept the movement for national independence, and the peasants' struggle for land and the solution of the agrarian problem isolated from each other. One might think that division and isolation were impossible and unnatural for the simple reason that the colonial-feudal system and colonial-feudal exploitation could only be ensured by a long-lasting political alliance between foreign invaders and big foreign capital, on the one hand, and big Indian feudal and semi-feudal landlords, on the other. This symbiosis of the dominant forces — foreign rulers and their reactionary supporters in India — had to be done away with by a national liberation, agrarian, bourgeois-democratic revolution. This never happened in India. The agrarian revolution never became the backbone of the anti-imperialist revolution. The two revolutions never complemented each other, never attained the degree of unity and interdependence necessary to lay the foundation for national liberation struggle to become a peasant revolution as well. Why was it that the Indian bourgeoisie sought to prevent the revolutionary process from running this course?

The point is that a considerable percentage of the Indian bourgeoisie, not only big, but also middle and petty urban bourgeoisie became "territorialised". Since the British capital always sought to hold back India's independent industrial development, its nascent bourgeoisie was becoming tied up to land by acquiring land property. Investment in land, I repeat, land, and not large-scale modern agricultural production, often proved more profitable and, more importantly, secure throughout the years of the British rule.

This should not be taken to mean that the multifaceted Indian bourgeoisie confined itself solely to land investments. As the capital grew, investments were increasingly channeled to industry, trade, banking, the infrastructure and large-scale plantation economy. However, absolutely all types of India's national capital — from commercial and usurer's capital, i. e., medieval, primary forms of capital, up to industrial, bank and even monopoly capital — were and still are linked to land property, to the exploitation of the small enslaved peasantry ensured by the colonialists wielding state power, their disposing of a

mighty machinery of coercion and by what was in fact military occupation of the country.

This peculiarity of the Indian national bourgeoisie and the vestiges of feudalism still dominating village life, determined certain political tactics. The specific character of the political development of an oppressed nation and, above all, bourgeois nationalism that concealed contradictions both among classes and within the propertied classes shaped the correlation of anti-imperialist political forces and secured for the bourgeoisie considerable leeway in maneuvering in respect to the peasantry. The bourgeoisie heavily relied on this sort of maneuvering in the national liberation, anti-imperialist struggle and thus avoided a simultaneous development of an anti-feudal peasant movement.

All this made it possible for the Indian bourgeoisie to escape active struggle against feudal lords and landowners who preyed on the Indian peasants. This also accounts for their compromise with the feudal-landlord class and their use, upon coming to power, of the policy of reforms whereby the vestiges of feudalism, so torturous for the peasants, could only be done away with in a very slow and gradual way.

Gandhi was the only political figure able to provide the necessary leadership to the peasants and involve them in the anti-imperialist (and not anti-feudal) struggle. He had the necessary political influence and relied on a mass political organisation. Moreover, no one else was closer to the peasants and had a better knowledge of the Indian rural way of life. The peasants recognised him as Mahatma, the great soul or, in other words, a saint. However, while expressing, in his own way, the growing social protests, social aspirations and what Lenin called the flabbiness of the patriarchal countryside, Gandhi remained the head of a liberation movement that was national-bourgeois in terms of its leadership. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress succeeded in channeling the revival and the revolutionary potential of the peasantry along such lines as to gain national independence without letting the anti-imperialist struggle grow into an agrarian social revolution.

Meanwhile, peasants accounted for nearly 80 per cent of India's population. The bourgeoisie sought to postpone changes in the country's social system until it came to pow-

er and was able to effect them in their own, rather than peasant, way, promoting their own, rather than peasants' interests. The bourgeoisie planned to gradually reform agriculture in their own way, through the bourgeoisification of landlords and accelerating the richer peasants' transformation into entrepreneurs at the cost of the poor masses. Whether and to what extent the Indian bourgeoisie achieved that aim following the attainment of independence is a separate issue to which many articles and books have been devoted. We should only say here that although capitalism in India's agriculture made noticeable progress, the bourgeois reform failed to fully resolve the agrarian question. Poorer peasants — small owners or tenants — still predominate in the Indian countryside; at the same time, the rural proletariat, the propertied peasants have grown in numbers. All this has brought essentially new features into the life of the Indian village.

The Indian example corroborates the Marxist-Leninist tenet about the coexistence of two trends — revolutionary-democratic and bourgeois-nationalist, reformist — in the national liberation movement and about the dual political role of the national bourgeoisie. Both trends work to eliminate the foreign rule, sharing, in this sense, a common goal and striking up a natural alliance. A united anti-imperialist front of all the forces participating in the national liberation struggle has always been an important prerequisite for achieving and consolidating national independence. However, if in the course of a national liberation struggle, the revolutionary-democratic trend advocates an agrarian revolution and, later, other transformations benefitting the people, the reformist trend does everything to delay the solution of these tasks and seeks to isolate the issue of power from agrarian and social issues.

The Indian national bourgeoisie would have never armed itself with the ideology of Gandhism, would not have made full use of it, had it not met its basic class and political interests, that boiled down to abolishing British political rule and establishing instead their own power in a peaceful way and with a reliance on the mass movement headed by Gandhi. They used the movement to promote both national and — especially — their own class goals. The advocates of Gandhism and the national

bourgeoisie had much in common, focusing as they did on the general national, anti-colonialist struggle to secure state independence for India and proceeding from the same class interests as the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies. In the long run, this accounts for the objectively bourgeois character of the utopian peasant socialism in a country developing along capitalist lines.

It stands to reason that the Gandhian idea of *ahimsa* (non-violence), being closely linked to the religious beliefs of the peasants, furthered liberation struggle and drew peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie to the side of the national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie used the principle of non-violence as a means to involve the masses in the struggle against the colonialists, to make the latter leave India and, at the same time, to retain their class control over the nation. The petty-bourgeois traits in Gandhi's ideology as a thinker and politician were obscured due to his political unity with the bourgeois Indian National Congress and his being its long-time and universally recognised leader.

Gandhi combined the traits of a utopian thinker whose views were rooted in peasant psychology and those of a sober-minded politician of great foresight who objectively worked in the interest of the national bourgeoisie which expressed the common aspirations of the nation. This combination of different traits in Gandhi's ideology prevented its peasant aspect from becoming more prominent. It also often urged Gandhi to compromise which was only natural in the context of inevitable contradictions typical of various classes and social groups involved in the common national anti-imperialist struggle. This is why Gandhism cannot be described solely as the objective expression of the national bourgeoisie's interest in the liberation struggle. Gandhism is broader than that. It was brought into existence by a whole set of phenomena inherent in the Indian national liberation movement and social forces participating in it. It embodied not only their common interests but also differences and contradictions. Gandhism was a part of the life of a predominantly peasant nation and therefore it could not but reflect the Indian worker's spontaneous striving for social justice, a striving that went beyond the bourgeoisie's class interests.

Without bearing this in mind one cannot fully appreciate

Gandhi's historic role, the role determined by his extraordinary closeness to the people. The secret of his influence lay in his closeness to the people. While acting in close ideological and political alliance with bourgeois public figures, Gandhi sincerely did his best to remain close to the working people. It is precisely this closeness to the masses that secured for him a leading position and a special role in the Indian National Congress. In his article "Democracy and Narodism in China" Lenin wrote, "The chief representative, or the chief social bulwark, of this Asian bourgeoisie that is still capable of supporting a historically progressive cause, is the peasant."¹ This observation helps us to understand Gandhi's role and his relationship both with the national bourgeoisie and the peasants. Gandhi and Gandhism provided a strong link between the national bourgeoisie and the peasants.

Some of the literature on the question published before the war revealed a lack of understanding of the diversity of national and historically determined forms of mass struggle and of their interdependence. Some of the authors tended to make an absolute of some particular method of struggle. The present-day sectarians and dogmatists within the national liberation movements make an absolute of the armed struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racism, while rejecting non-violent forms. The unilateral approach to assessing and applying tactical methods of mass struggle resulted in ignoring the dialectics of struggle.

Gandhi, too, tended to take a biased approach to the forms of mass struggle, declaring the non-violent resistance to the colonialists and racists to be its only and universal form. At certain stages of the liberation struggle, many of Gandhi's opponents were equally resolute and biased in denying the positive role of the non-violent forms of struggle. They tended to interpret non-violence as inaction bordering on reconciliation with reaction and colonialism. Gandhi's opponents grounded their criticism on rejecting *ahimsa*, Gandhi's philosophical creed, in principle. This was justifiable and correct. What was wrong was the spread of their wholesale negation to the political method of struggle against imperialism.

Scientific socialism by no means seeks to make an abso-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 165.

lute of any one form of struggle, be it peaceful or non-peaceful. It recognises the need to fully use, combine and dialectically intertwine the various forms of struggle. It recognises the need to constantly renovate and replenish the arsenal of the means and methods of revolution and to verify, test and select new and effective forms of struggle. The Marxist-Leninist revolutionary tactics do not rely on any one, no matter how effective, form of mass struggle. It seeks to maintain the correspondence of the chosen forms and methods of struggle with its nature, levels and goals. Finally, it demands that an advanced political party should be prepared for and capable of decisively and quickly changing the forms and methods of struggle to suit specific historical conditions.

Scientific socialism knows of various methods of struggle, including non-violent ones. Communists have always used them. But Marxists certainly take a negative approach to the Gandhian principle of non-violence, *ahimsa*, provided it is the only one relied upon. Gandhian non-violence in regards to colonialists and racists is highly controversial. It combines active protest with the tolerance of the enemy. Gandhi saw this combination of protest and tolerance as the essence of non-violence and as the only acceptable and possible form of resistance to colonial and racist oppression. There is a purely metaphysical aspect to Gandhian non-violence and it is traceable to religious dogmas and asceticism. But it certainly also incorporates quite realistic ideas about tactical applications of peaceful forms of mass and individual anti-imperialist, anti-racist and even anti-feudal and anti-capitalist struggle (Gandhi never called for them, though).

It is absolutely clear that the idea of *ahimsa* in its specific Gandhian form and large-scale application during the years of struggle against the British colonial rule in India or against racism in South Africa contained a considerable revolutionary potential. A great credit goes to Gandhi for working out and applying original forms and methods of peaceful confrontation with the colonialists. Gandhi took *ahimsa* beyond the limits of purely individual action developing it into a method of prolonged and purposeful mass struggle. He adapted it to the anti-imperialist sentiment and social demands of the masses. He elaborated a technique for non-violent mass action. It was aggressive nationwide action against the order of things and laws

established by the colonialists, against the constitution the colonialists imposed on the country they conquered and the people they suppressed, against the tyranny of foreign rulers. The non-violent mass campaigns waged under Gandhi's leadership against British imperialists between the 1920s and the 1940s, required much courage from their participants and created great difficulties for the colonialists. They quickly revolutionised the situation in India.

It should be acknowledged that Gandhi was a brilliant organiser of non-violent mass movement. He knew very well when campaigns should be launched and when his calls for non-violent struggle would gain a nationwide support and involve tens of millions of common folk. When assessing Gandhi's ability as the leader and organiser of a liberation movement that took on a specific Indian form, one should point out that there was no one in India who saw better than Gandhi did when a non-violent campaign had to be terminated lest it turned into revolutionary violence and eventually into a social revolution against the ruling classes and the foreign oppressors. In other words, Gandhi never used or was willing to use in full all the revolutionary potential of the non-violent resistance of the masses. Gandhi and the then leaders of the Indian National Congress ignored the potential altogether because it could well bring the movement to a higher stage, that of a resolute, uncompromising and uncontrolled action against the colonialists, a real struggle of the urban and rural working people against exploitation not only by foreigners but also by their compatriots. That was what Gandhi and the Congress tried by all means to avoid through pursuing their policy of "pure" anti-imperialist struggle with reliance on national unity and keeping the door always open to negotiations with Britain.

As we see it, the criticism from the Left of Gandhi's inclination to compromise was justified. The critics would have done better had they not denied the potentialities inherent in non-violent anti-imperialist struggle (as was often the case in the years between 1920s and 1940s) but rather revealed the danger of claiming that non-violent resistance was the only way of combating colonialism and racism, the danger of making an absolute of non-violent struggle through relying on religious dogmas or abstract moral categories and ignoring the social class character of the forces involved in the movement.

Let us review in brief the application of the Gandhian non-violent principles in international practice. Owing to its specific character, the Gandhian idea of non-violence proved more realistic when applied to inter-state relations, which cannot be said about the class relations. If we put aside its metaphysical implications, and look at it in an international context, *ahimsa* means renunciation of the use of force, outlawing war and thereby giving force to the principle of peaceful inter-state relations. Gandhi came to realise the need for strengthening international friendship and establishing just relations among states based on mutual respect, non-interference and resolving all contradictions through negotiations. Gandhi's ideas have a considerable impact on the government policy of the Republic of India shaped by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Many Indians justly renounce the extremes of *ahimsa* which more than once prompted Gandhi's defeatist slogans with respect to international issues as well as his ideas of sacrificing his own and his nation's interests in the name of non-violence when faced with aggression. The abstract, non-historical interpretation of the problem of ensuring peace regardless of the aggressive designs or direct aggression of the enemy, proved false.

The social views held by the progressive figures of the national liberation movement had certain things in common with Russian populism and the ideas of Lev Tolstoy. The social-historical interpretation of Gandhi's and Tolstoy's affinity is based on Lenin's analysis of Tolstoy's world outlook. At the same time, one cannot but notice the essential difference between Gandhi's bourgeois-nationalist political attitude and the stand taken by the great Russian author.

With his aspiration towards national liberation and democracy, Gandhi as leader of the anti-imperialist movement in India, could not fail to be influenced by the first Russian revolution which stimulated the revival of Asia and specifically of India. Neither could he avoid the influence by Tolstoy's criticisms and by the experience of organised mass liberation struggle. No matter how specific his own approach was, he considered the All-Russia political strike of October 1905 to be a great lesson for Indian patriots. He called on them to show the same strength as the Russians did.

When speaking about Gandhi's attitude to the national

bourgeoisie, one should be mindful of the peculiarities of the period when Gandhi and the bourgeoisie were in close cooperation, when he became the ideological leader of the Indian National Congress and when the Congress organised and carried out what Gandhi wanted to be done — above all, non-violent mass campaigns. This was a time when it was essential to promote the alliance of all anti-imperialist forces, including the national bourgeoisie. The distinctive feature of this period was the emergence of a nationwide anti-imperialist front. Not only did it shape relations between different, sometimes opposed classes, drawing them closer together in the common struggle against colonialism, but determined, to an extent, the relatively long-term political goals of the classes involved in the struggle.

Gandhi was closely tied up with the national bourgeoisie which was at the head of the national liberation movement. The aim of attaining full political independence set forth by the Indian National Congress and the call for an unrelenting struggle against colonialism brought the bourgeoisie closer to the entire nation. This community of interests of the various classes in the struggle for independence brought about the thirty-year long political alliance between Gandhi, who was in fact a petty-bourgeois democrat and a Utopian, and the bourgeois leaders of the Congress, who sought to remove the foreign rulers from the scene in order to secure full state power for themselves.

The two sides — Gandhi and the Congress — realised that their interests coincided only for a certain, probably long, period and that they should rely on each other. In Gandhi the Congress had a popular national leader, a brilliant tactician, a strong-willed person capable of rallying around himself a whole generation of active, energetic young fighters through whom he could stir to action tens of millions of oppressed people and turn them into his followers. In the Congress Gandhi had a powerful and experienced political organisation unrivalled in India. We shall not describe here the relationship between Gandhi and the Congress. We shall only note that in the final period of the struggle against British imperialism, when the goal of the struggle — political independence — became almost tangible, the contradictions between Gandhi and the bourgeois leaders of the Congress, which had always existed below the surface, took on a dramatic and bitter form.

Once they attained power, many of the Congress members forgot about Gandhi's democratic, humanitarian ideals. In their view, Gandhi had fulfilled his mission by successfully completing the struggle for political independence he had led over the years.

Meanwhile, Gandhi envisaged a new stage in the struggle. He was thinking about a non-violent action campaign to achieve broader social goals. He was deeply disillusioned by the division of India and the outburst of Hindu-Moslem strife that led to massacre and bloodshed. He was upset by the overall manifestations of bourgeois acquisitiveness, careerism and selfishness. As he saw it, once India gained political independence, a struggle was to be launched for economic, moral and social independence, that is, for the assertion of the principles of social justice, Sarvodaya.

It would be interesting to analyse Gandhi's attitude towards the caste system which still plays an important role in India. On the one hand, Gandhi's view of the caste system and the plight of the untouchables was shaped by the impact of spontaneous peasant democracy, his feeling for the common people and his awareness of the need to get the masses increasingly involved in the anti-imperialist struggle. On the other hand, his views could not but reflect conservative elements in his thinking, his strong adherence to religious traditions and his reformist theory of social evolution.

Gandhi could not accept the inequality and superiority that lay in the basis of the caste system giving rise to traditional isolation and a prohibition of a communication between different castes. However, what was negative about the caste system was seen by Gandhi not as the essence of the system but as a distortion of its principles. While criticising many of the caste traditions, Gandhi felt that the ideal form of society's organisation was suggested by the ancient system of the four *varnas* — the Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (merchants and artisans) and the Sudras (peasants). He believed that a person's place in society was predetermined by his hereditary abilities. This non-historical, unscientific conception affected Gandhi's basic sociological views. It explains why instead of analysing social relations in a given class society he indulged in abstract talk on heredity. According to the Gandhian theory of trusteeship, the landlords are there to serve as "fathers" to the peasants,

and the difference between the capitalist and the hired worker is determined by the fact that the former is endowed with incomparable abilities for economic management, while the latter is by nature meant for manual labour rather than management.

In the issue of the "untouchables" Gandhi showed more consistency. He considered the institute of untouchability a disgrace to India and devoted much of his effort to urging legal equality for almost a third of the country's population. Gandhi's noble democratic stand noticeably influenced public attitudes in India, assisted in bringing about legislation on the civil rights of the untouchables and stimulated efforts towards improving their traditionally unbearable living conditions.

No matter how petty-bourgeois, peasant-oriented and, consequently, utopian the idea of "society of social justice" may look, an open, large-scale struggle to achieve it, even by the very specific, Gandhian methods, upon the attainment of political independence, could have signalled a major stride forward. However, the struggle was checked by the bourgeois-capitalist élite. Although Gandhi was highly critical of its selfishness, he never organised — and was hardly able to organise — a mass campaign against the élite.

* * *

India's gaining political independence significantly altered the alignment of class forces in the country and brought about qualitative changes within the framework of national unity. Gandhism gradually ceased to be the only ideological and political means of uniting the different classes. This happened for a number of objective reasons, such as the country's transfer to independent bourgeois development, and also because this turning-point in India's recent history chronologically almost coincided with the death of Gandhi whose personal qualities contributed, almost as much as his philosophical and political doctrine and vigorous efforts, to the consolidation of India's national forces. Over the years since the declaration of India's independence, the tendency for the opposed class forces to take on more definite forms and grow ideologically consolidated and politically organised has become

strong enough to dominate social life. This tendency manifests itself in the disappearance of the former basis and stability of the united national front which, due to historical inertia, still has a certain impact on the various groups and classes of Indian society.

One should bear in mind that since today, too, India often becomes a target of imperialist pressure, national unity continues to play a historically positive role in counteracting it. In this respect, the interests of all the anti-imperialist forces — national-revolutionary, national-reformist and proletarian — continue to coincide. In the current context, the initiative in countering imperialist pressure increasingly comes from the left-wing democratic and progressive circles. Though still isolated, they grow ever stronger, creating serious obstacles for the activation of the big monopoly capital and feudal-Hindu reaction.

These qualitative changes in the alignment of class forces have by no means ousted Gandhism from the political arena. Gandhi's authority and influence, especially among the peasants and petty urban bourgeoisie were too high for the Gandhian concepts not to be resorted to in the ongoing political struggles. They are heavily relied on as a means of propaganda by various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political parties. In a certain sense, Gandhism shared the fate of the former national anti-imperialist unity that took shape in the course of the struggle for independence. Gandhism was ideologically weakened much the same way the national unity was gradually eroded by the growing class contradictions it revealed. This was a process in which the parties both to the right and to the left of the Indian National Congress, and the INC itself, took part. The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois trends, many of which are competing with one another, resort to individual Gandhian concepts. As a rule, they do not fail to give them a biased, dogmatic interpretation. Today the moral and political principles of Gandhism, as well as its economic and social doctrine, are seen in a different light.

Gandhism has always tended to declare religious and moral tenets to be the universal truths of political struggle. Today Gandhism is considered as a kind of holy script. It hasn't escaped the sad fate of all holy scripts which are being used to justify various, often mutually exclusive, interests and are a far cry both from their original spirit and the historical activity of their authors.

To judge by some writings of that period, Indian reactionaries sought to make maximum use of Gandhi's authority and the popularity of his doctrines. The right-wingers within the Congress, just as the reactionary Jan Sangh and Swatantra parties, used Gandhi's social and economic concepts as a basis from which to criticise the often inconsistent but historically progressive social and economic reforms carried out by the Congress, and to assail the state planning system, the public sector, the policy of industrialisation, the measures to restrict monopoly activity and even the bourgeois, essentially half-hearted agrarian reform.

The reactionaries use Gandhi's name viciously to undermine mutual trust among the peoples in India and to justify the harmful, centrifugal trends encouraged, in certain states of India, by irresponsible elements interested in weakening and dividing the united multinational India and not in consolidating its unity and power. The reactionaries seek to impair the friendly relations between the Republic of India and the socialist countries, to incite enmity towards Indian democrats, progressive forces, working class and communists.

The centrists within the Indian National Congress used the Gandhian idea of non-violence to warrant the inconsistency and procrastination in devising and implementing democratic reforms. As a result, the idea of non-violence, which in the years of struggle against imperialism was charged with great energy and appealed to the masses, has been transformed into an unduly protracted reconciliation with the long-outdated and obvious social evils.

Gandhism has been always present in the political life of independent India. However, after the defeat suffered by the Indian National Congress in the March 1977 elections and the consequent downfall of the government of Indira Gandhi superseded by a Janata Party government, Gandhism, as was pointed out by the Indian press, came into fashion again. The circles close to the leaders of the ruling party criticised the INC's deviations from Gandhism and stressed the difference between Mahatma Gandhi's and Jawaharlal Nehru's approach to social and political problems. The "Back to Gandhi" call was accompanied by contrasting some of the more progressive policies of the INC to Gandhism.

Here again we witness a peculiar interpretation of

Gandhism. The advocates of the "Back to Gandhi" movement call for the accelerated development of cottage industry and agriculture. There is nothing wrong about this problem as such as it meets the needs of national economic development. It is also true that its roots can be traced to the arsenal of Gandhian ideas. However, it is often given a somewhat one-sided interpretation and is counterposed to the industrialisation policy. It is associated with the call to decentralise the economy, do away with the "undue focus" on the public sector and heavy industry projects and to give priority to agricultural development. The attention to agriculture and cottage industry that provide jobs and means of subsistence for millions of people is certainly warranted. But then, does it contradict the drive towards the development of heavy industry, without which India's economic independence can never be reached? Is there a reason to question the outstanding role played by the public sector in building up the country's modern industry? Is a major developing country conceivable without a powerful public sector?

The "Back to Gandhi" call is often used to contrast Nehru's platform with that of M. K. Gandhi. There is no denying the fact — and they both confirmed it — that the two most prominent figures of the Indian liberation movement held largely different views. Both of them, however, were aware of the essential similarity of their ideas and considered themselves comrades-in-arms in the struggle for independence. Moreover, in his ideological evolution, Jawaharlal Nehru was drawing ever closer to Gandhism, exactly as had been predicted by Gandhi who, back in 1942, described Jawaharlal Nehru as his political heir. While the authors close to the Congress tended to exaggerate the closeness of Gandhi's and Nehru's views, the political opponents of the Congress sought to exaggerate their differences. The "Back to Gandhi" call thus presupposed a rejection of Nehru's ideas. Both approaches are biased. A comparative study of the views of M. K. Gandhi and J. Nehru reveals their mutual influence. Throughout his life, Nehru was influenced by Gandhi's principles and personality. Gandhi, too, adopted some of the ideas of his younger friend and admitted that they enriched the ideological platform of the Congress. This is confirmed, among other things, by his approval of the resolution on the basic rights and the economic programme that was

moved by J. Nehru at the INC Karachi Session in 1931.

The contraposition of these two names is hardly warranted. What is more important is the fact that neither Gandhi nor Nehru could offer a solution to many of the problems faced by India today. At the same time, it is impossible to solve them without relying on both Gandhi's and Nehru's legacy and reputation. Both men became part and parcel of national consciousness and culture, of national life in general. While Gandhi tends to be associated with traditions and national roots, Nehru is associated with hopes for the future and a belief in the common progress of humanity.

Obviously the problem lies not in the choice between Gandhi and Nehru, but in what to utilize and what to reject in their legacies, how to synthesise them in the interest of the Indian working people. The approach to the problem depends on one's class position and political stand.

Today Gandhism is resorted to in the attacks against certain aspects of the INC's economic policy, first and foremost, its attitude to the correlation between industry and agriculture, the role of the public sector and the cottage industries and the issue of centralisation. As for the social ideals of Gandhism, the denunciation of capitalism in industry and agriculture, and the aspiration towards a classless and exploitation-free society, the "Back to Gandhi" supporters seem to be indifferent to these issues. The same is true of the Gandhian methods of achieving social change and exerting social pressure. What Gandhi described as trusteeship was never confined to good intentions and he never ruled out legal regulation, state intervention and resort to the well-tested instrument of Satyagraha. Regrettably, the "Back to Gandhi" call does not signal any attempts to translate the principles of Sarvodaya and trusteeship into life and to breathe new life into Gandhi's utopian socialism.

Bourgeois politicians of all hues make use of Gandhi's ideas of trusteeship and Sarvodaya to blunt the class awareness of the working people in the historically new context, when the working class and the peasants are primarily counteracted by the big monopoly capital, by the now wealthier and politically stronger national bourgeoisie and capitalist landlords.

The anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist and democratic forces denounce the attempts of the bourgeoisie to play

on Gandhi's authority in promoting their own selfish class interests. However, the more loyal followers of Gandhi, among them Vinoba Bhave, reassess the values within the bounds of Gandhian concepts, too. On the one hand, they tend to limit the social aspects of Gandhism, on the other, they avoid the well-tested methods of non-violent mass resistance in the present-day struggle against the proper-tied exploitative classes and gradually pass over from non-violent resistance to social evil to the call for general non-resistance. The active social character of Gandhi's ideas and his specific way of intervening in social and political life on the side of the masses are now forgotten by the Indian bourgeois politicians and ideologists. The lesser lights of Gandhism tend to portray it only as a way towards individual moral perfection and a call for the reconciliation of all social classes.

It should be remembered that not all which is termed Gandhism today is really Gandhism. The attempts to use M. K. Gandhi's name to pursue the ends contradicting the very essence of his doctrine have become fairly widespread in India.

The one-sided understanding of Gandhism as the ideology solely of the Indian national bourgeoisie cannot be instrumental in opposing the above-described tendencies. It does not reveal their true essence which boils down to the desire to place the popular ideology at the service of capitalism and reaction.

The time that separates us from the days of the Indian people's struggle for independence enables us to give a more objective assessment to Gandhism. We can see today that Gandhism as an ideological and political doctrine was irreconcilably opposed, despite Gandhi's frequent compromise with the British administration, to colonialism and that Gandhi was adamant in striving after the ultimate goal of national independence. Gandhi's compromise brought about a temporary curtailment of the mass movement. But each time, under his guidance, the liberation movement revived at a higher level and advanced more clear-cut demands. Gandhi's whole life proves that he was always committed to anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist struggle and remained loyal to the humanistic, albeit not altogether feasible, ideal of social justice so close to the hearts of the popular, peasant masses.

The assessment of the social importance of Gandhi's

activity given by his associate, Jawaharlal Nehru, has largely remained valid. Nehru wrote, "It should be remembered that the nationalist movement in India, like all nationalist movements, was essentially a bourgeois movement. It represented the natural historical stage of development, and to consider it or to criticize it as a working-class movement is wrong. Gandhi represented that movement and the Indian masses in relation to that movement to a supreme degree, and he became the voice of the Indian people to that extent. He functioned inevitably within the orbit of nationalist ideology, but the dominating passion that consumed him was a desire to raise the masses. In this respect he was always ahead of the nationalist movement, and he gradually made it, within the limits of its own ideology, turn in this direction...

"It is perfectly true that Gandhi, functioning in the nationalist plane, does not think in terms of the conflict of classes, and tries to compose their differences. But the action he has indulged in and taught the people, has inevitably raised mass consciousness tremendously and made social issues vital. And his insistence on the raising of the masses at the cost, wherever necessary, of vested interests has given a strong orientation to the national movement in favour of the masses." ¹

India's progressives seek to prevent the attempts to destroy the democratic substance of Gandhi's doctrine. His name and ideas ought not to be misappropriated by the Indian bourgeois and landlord reactionaries who are acting against the interests of the masses and ignore Gandhi's anti-imperialist orientation and democratic humanism.

The really consistent Indian progressive public figures — revolutionaries and advocates of scientific socialism — have always had fundamental ideological and tactical differences with Gandhism. But they have a sincere respect for Gandhi's work and noble goals. They are the ones to rely, in their efforts for a better future for the Indian people, on Gandhi's democratic social ideals infusing them with actual, scientific content. They are the ones to apply his methods of struggle and his tactics of organising the mass movement. They realise that the Gan-

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India and the World*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1936, pp. 172-173, 174-175.

dhian forms of mass movement are a component part of universal forms of mass national liberation and class struggle forged by the world revolutionary movement.

The unity of all the democratic, left-wing forces of India is presently imperative. Those who have remained loyal to the ideals of the great fighter for India's independence and who appreciate his contribution to the national liberation struggle should find their place in it.

* * *

Gandhism has been studied by many Soviet scholars. There is a whole history of research devoted to Gandhi and his doctrine. In the past there were certain mistakes in the interpretation of Gandhism by Soviet authors who held a somewhat biased view of it. Some of these mistakes can be accounted for by India's having been isolated from the Soviet Union and the international working-class movement for a long time, as well as by the highly specific conditions prevailing in that country and the extremely original national traditions so vividly manifested in Gandhism. The research conducted by Soviet Indologists in the 1930s and 1940s was also affected by a sectarian interpretation of some of the major questions of the Indian national liberation movement at the general democratic stage of its development and the underestimation of the anti-imperialist role played by the Indian national bourgeoisie. The appraisal of Gandhism in Marxist literature could have not but been affected by the lack of unity in India's national liberation movement. Because of this lack of unity, the political forces that objectively were predestined to lead a joint fight against imperialism in fact worked on their own and sometimes against one another. Lastly, there were objective difficulties in studying as complicated and contradictory phenomenon as Gandhism. In the heart of anti-imperialist struggle and ideological polemics between Marxists and national reformists, many of the students of Gandhism failed to view it clearly and fully in all its complexity.

In studying M. K. Gandhi's ideological platform and historical role, Marxists focus on viewing scientific socialism and Gandhism against the background of the national liberation movement and the existence of a young nation-state that has liberated itself from colonial depen-

dence. The two ideologies cannot be compared because they are as different as science is different from a Utopia. What can be analysed are the tendencies in the development of India's ideological and political development.

Although the influence of Gandhism and that of scientific socialism in India is incomparable due to the tremendous prevalence of the former, the struggle for influence among the masses was largely waged between these two ideologies. The Indian bourgeoisie have always been aware of this fact. Already in the years of the struggle for independence, they highly appreciated Gandhism as an ideology to be used as a weapon against scientific socialism that was quickly spreading in India, especially among educated urban revolutionary circles and left-wing democratic youth. Acting through the Indian National Congress, the national bourgeoisie relied on Gandhism as a guarantee against the spread of scientific socialism amongst the people. At the same time it was through Gandhism that general national anti-imperialist sentiments could be expressed.

Today Gandhism and scientific socialism remain the two main ideological trends in Indian society.

How are Gandhism and scientific socialism treated in India? There is a dual understanding of Gandhism in the country today. On the one hand, it is interpreted as a system of Gandhi's views in terms of anti-imperialism and peasant socialism. On the other hand, the many conflicting bourgeois schools of thought (which incidentally conflict with the main concepts of Gandhism as well) focus on isolated Gandhian ideas and interpret them in accordance with their own class interests. In the first case Gandhism is regarded as the product of the national liberation movement of the Indian people and therefore contains essential democratic elements. This makes it possible to speak about its affinity, in a certain sense, with any truly democratic, progressive movement. Hence there is a possibility in the future of joint anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-racist, anti-war, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly struggle of all the democratic and progressive forces in India, the forces that uphold the interests of the masses. United in a national-democratic front, the followers of scientific socialism and the supporters of Gandhism can make up a powerful force in the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. In our time,

all democratic and progressive social movements, including those in India, are united by a number of common goals. Among the aims pursued by the Indian Marxists is first limiting and then eliminating foreign and local monopoly capitalism and setting the stage for the country's gradual moving away from capitalist development. This will call for a joint effort, promote further differentiation among the Gandhists and consolidate the supporters of social progress.

As for that interpretation of Gandhism which places it at the service of India's big bourgeoisie and reactionary forces seeking to oppose Gandhi's social ideals against the democratic movement and thus render hollow their anti-capitalist content, one can say with assurance that any attempt to point to an ideological similarity of Gandhism with scientific socialism would simply be to no avail.

An analysis of Gandhism from the standpoint of scientific socialism not only reveals a certain organic affinity between Gandhism and bourgeois notions and interests, which is natural and inevitable in any kind of nationalist reformism and utopian socialism, but also the acceptability of Gandhism in terms of the bourgeoisie's class interests. The fact that Gandhism combines a strong exposure of capitalist society from moral, religious and ethical points of view with the advancement of such methods of transforming society which actually guard it, as far as possible, against revolution, reserves for Gandhism the support of the Indian bourgeoisie despite Gandhi's criticisms of bourgeois morality and life-style.

It is not only in the sphere of the struggle for national independence that Gandhism comes close to scientific socialism. In Gandhism, sincere concern for the welfare of the masses, the desire to improve the situation of the working people and bring about a "society of social justice" are expressed in the archaic and utopian idea of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya, like any other version of utopian or national socialism, is based on some of the principles that were advanced by the founders of scientific socialism over a century ago — the need for everyone to work, the elimination of the exploitation of man by man, the abolition of the class division of society, social ownership of the principal means of production, the distribution of material goods according to the work done, etc. This probably fully describes the similarities of the approaches taken by Gandhism and scientific socialism to the major problems

facing Indian society. On all other issues the two ideologies differ. This concerns, among other things, the critique of capitalist society, the interpretation of the socialist ideal and of the methods to attain it, the understanding of the classes and the class struggle, the state of the future, the social and political party forces which are historically destined and actually able to establish social justice throughout the world. Scientific socialism is opposed to Gandhism on these basic issues of the theory and practice of effecting transformation in modern society.

The following is one of the brilliant examples of the way Gandhi exposed capitalist and feudal oppression.

When Gandhi was asked what were the ways, in his opinion, for princes, landlords, millionaires, usurers and the like in India to become richer, he said that the exploitation of the people was at the moment the best way for them to get rich. He said that there was no social justification whatsoever for them to live in greater comfort than ordinary workers and peasants whose labour created wealth. However, motives like this did not prevail in Gandhi's criticism of modern exploitative society. Gandhi's denunciation of European civilisation lacks clear-cut social orientation and shows ignorance of actual ways to overcome the evils of society he so keenly observed. Gandhi's defining the target of his criticisms as "European civilisation" is typical in this respect — instead of "bourgeois" the adjective was "European" or "machine". Gandhi would stress that the point was not that their ancestors had not known how to invent machines, but that they realised that if they had invented them, they would have become slaves and forfeit their moral make-up. Their idea was that people should only work with the help of their own hands and feet. Gandhian criticism is focused not on the capitalist mode of production, but on machine production in general. Its development had allegedly been vetoed by the nation's ancestors. For Gandhi, machinery was the root of all social evils — unemployment, exploitation, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few, etc. He never noted that all these consequences of large-industrial development were of a historically transient, class nature. For him, the enemy was the machine and not the exploitative classes.

As for the relations among the classes in the process of "damned" machine production, Gandhi failed to see them

as the material objective roots of the evils of exploitative society that he condemned. Although aware of class contradictions, Gandhi did not attach decisive importance to them. In his view, they were nothing more than a superstructure built over the naturally healthy human relations. Gandhi held that class struggle was alien to the Indian spirit. He felt that contradictions emerge and grow ever more acute as a result of greediness, selfishness, moral degradation and prejudice. Harmonious cooperation between the *zamindars* (landlords) and *rajatams* (peasants) and between the capitalists and the workers should be accepted as a normal state of relations. Gandhi neglected the class and economic laws of social development. His understanding of society's development and of history in general is idealistic, based as it is on ignoring political and economic regularities of the historical process. Therefore the Gandhian ideas about the best and the justest social changes are marked by subjectivism and voluntarism. According to Gandhi, people shall develop high moral standards and then, with time, social justice will inevitably prevail. Peace among classes and the propertied classes' trusteeship over the non-propertied ones constitute a component part of Gandhism. Gandhi held that class struggle could only emerge because capitalists and landlords ceased to be responsible and forgot that they should be fathers of the "family" and that they were part of the "family". He wrote, "In the West an eternal conflict has set up between capital and labour. Each party considers the other as his natural enemy. That spirit seems to have entered India also, and if it finds a permanent lodgement, it would be the end of our industry and of our peace. If both parties were to realize that each is dependent upon the other, there will be little cause for quarrel." ¹

Gandhi would not take into account the fact that the social and economic conditions of people's public and personal life, the bourgeois or the feudal mode of production of material and cultural benefits created unsurpassable obstacles for the universal spread of lofty moral principles throughout society. The Gandhian non-violent method of changing the world is an old, honest and sincere call on the exploited not to apply violence against the exploiters and

¹ M. K. Gandhi, *Towards Non-Violent Socialism*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1957, p. 42.

the call on the exploiters to be nice towards the exploited. Over the ages, including centuries of Indian history, this call has proved to be futile.

Criticising the Gandhian way of making the absolute of the non-violence principle in his *An Autobiography*, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, "If there is one thing that history shows it is this: that economic interests shape the political views of groups and classes... It [non-violence] can, I think, carry us a long way, but I doubt if it can take us to the final goal... The present conflicts in society, national as well as class conflicts, can never be resolved except by coercion."¹

This gives an outline of the Gandhian critique of the "European civilisation" and of the concepts which Gandhi elaborated almost a century after the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and of Karl Marx's *Capital*. With the world's first socialist country already in existence and the epoch of the revolutionary overthrow of the "machine civilisation" (in other words, capitalism) so hated by Gandhi already under way, these doctrines looked utopian and the Gandhian criticism of capitalism looked completely helpless against the backdrop of the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism.

Marx, too, was a passionate critic of the evils of the "European civilisation", and not only passionate but also profound. However, what Marx wrote about was not European, but capitalist civilisation. With all indisputability of science, Marx showed the world the sufferings the introduction of machine production brought to the working masses. However, he pointed out that the evil was rooted not in machines but in the capitalist methods of industrialisation. Describing these methods he showed the historical inevitability of the capitalists' colonial conquests, including Britain's conquest of India with all the atrocities committed by the "agents of European civilisation" in this country. Marx revealed the class nature of bourgeois civilisation and the class character of the use of machinery.

This criticism of capitalist society, based on science, made it possible for Marx to substantially and convincingly define socialism as a society capable of resolving

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, Allied Publishers Private Limited, Bombay, 1962, pp. 544, 551.

all the contradictions inherent in capitalism. At the same time he showed that this society emerges from the material culture of capitalism and utilises the assets of technological progress, above all, big industry and machine production brought about by capitalism. By contrast, Gandhi's emotional and romantic criticism of bourgeois civilisation inevitably led him to illusory, utopian notions of socialism.

Gandhi carried on the tradition of the first Utopians who visualised the triumph of the abstract ideals of justice as a return to the "golden age". The Indian peasant community never protected its members against oppression by an Asian despot, conqueror or feudalised clan and tribal chiefs. This community always relied on the cruel laws of the caste system and over the centuries kept the country isolated from the outside world. The idyllic community has long since vanished in India, collapsing under the impact of commodity-oriented economy and then capitalism initially headed by British colonialists and at present, by the national bourgeoisie, capitalist landlords and the increasingly strong rich peasants.

Only with Gandhi's characteristically vague notion of the progressive historical process and inevitable evolution of human society from the lowest to the highest stage could the archaic picture of Sarvodaya be perceived as the ideal future. According to Gandhi, since the onward movement of contemporary machine civilisation brings about the people's privation with all the accompanying sufferings, there is no other way out than a return, by one's will effort, to the simple patriarchal customs. Gandhi calls not to the future but to the past. He suggests seeking support for the new society not in the growing elements of social progress modern capitalism brings into existence against its own will, but in the still surviving and historically doomed forms of production and social life.

Even if we admit the impossible, that is the possibility of artificial creation of a Sarvodaya-type of society, the extreme technical backwardness of this society would hold back economic, cultural and moral progress rendering the slogans about universal welfare, cultural development, etc., entirely senseless. Under the impact of inexorable intrinsic laws of social development, this

artificially recreated, isolated cell of society would generate anew increasingly powerful elements of decay which in the course of prolonged historical transformations had once led to the degeneration of the Indian community into archaic institution.

An analysis of Gandhism from the positions of scientific socialism usually, and justly, focuses on the means and methods of effecting social change. Non-violence is the banner of Gandhism. Gandhi is credited with discovering and implementing this method. Some of the critics of Marxism, among them some of Gandhi's followers, who possess second-hand (often distorted) knowledge of that philosophy believe it to be a negation of the principle of non-violence, a synonym of bloody armed struggle and an armed violent movement. This interpretation of the difference between the views of violence and non-violence held by Gandhism and scientific socialism suits the ideological opponents of scientific socialism. However, such views have nothing to do with reality, with the genuine attitude of scientific socialism to the forms, methods, means and ways of struggle for national and social liberation.

In our day, few people could be convinced that the followers of scientific socialism, true revolutionaries and not dogmatists and adventurers, stand for armed, violent struggle always and everywhere. This allegation contradicts the historical truth, the theory and the revolutionary practice of Marxism. The Marxists-Leninists have always been prepared to use any, even minimal opportunities of peaceful development of national liberation movement and social revolution and have always considered that from the point of view of the basic interests of the working class and all the working people, peaceful ways are always preferable to armed struggle. Their metaphysical and religious basis set aside, Gandhi's non-violent methods are nothing more than peaceful, unarmed methods of struggle. It is not Gandhi who ought to be credited with their discovery. It is completely obvious though that he achieved much in the elaboration and application of these methods against British colonialists and South African racists and made them truly effective by placing them at the disposal of the masses.

Long before Gandhi, all or nearly all the methods from the arsenal of Satyagraha — hunger strikes, demon-

strations, limited and general strikes, the non-payment of taxes and boycotting the colonial and racist authorities — had been widely used by people of all nations, the international working-class and national liberation movements. They had been applied by peasant movements in Western Europe, Russia, Latin America and many countries of Asia in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the working-class movements that started to unfold back in the 18th century. What was new about Gandhism was not the discovery and utilisation of these methods of mass struggle but, above all, their large-scale application against the British colonialists and making the absolute of them as the only moral and religion-sanctioned ones.

The history of the national liberation movement in India knows of powerful anti-colonial action, the proletariat's general strikes, peasants' mass movements, and broad student and youth campaigns. It knows of the armed uprisings of workers, peasants, Indian sailors and Anglo-Indian army soldiers. Many great examples of courage and self-sacrifice have gone down in the history of the Indian liberation movement. The specifically proletarian revolutionary methods of struggle played a great role in the movement, at times having a decisive influence on it. The backbone of the mass movements, however, was formed by the peasants and petty urban bourgeoisie who followed Gandhi.

Gandhism proclaimed non-violence the only and universally applicable method of struggle which allegedly could painlessly resolve national and social contradictions of class society or an oppressed country. Life proved this allegation to be wrong. Proceeding from reality, the age-long experience of humankind and, above all, that of the struggle waged by the working class and peasants of all countries, scientific socialism does not make an absolute of any method of struggle, turning it into a dogma and indiscriminately imposing it on the masses irrespective of the times, political situation, and the historical and national context.

When peaceful forms of struggle prove ineffective because of the furious resistance put up by foreign colonialists or domestic bourgeoisie and landlords, when the exploiters unleashed an armed struggle against the people, Marxists suggest, in view of the concrete situa-

tion, passing over to more resolute methods of class struggle, up to its supreme form — armed uprising and civil war. When Gandhists are compelled to admit that it is impossible to have their demands satisfied and ideals implemented through non-violent methods because of violence applied by colonialists, they explain this by the masses not being morally ready for victory. Whenever the masses fail to observe the religious and ethical principles of non-violent movement, the Gandhists urge them not to be concerned about results of the movement, to terminate it, put up with the impossibility of reaching the goals of the struggle, and seek consolation in the awareness of the moral and religious duty they have performed. Here lies the actual difference between Gandhism and scientific socialism as regards the methods of mass struggle.

It would be relevant to recall here Jawaharlal Nehru's attitude to the methods of struggle. While giving great credit to M. K. Gandhi, he commented that "for us and for the National Congress as a whole the non-violent method was not, and could not be, a religion or an unchallengeable creed or dogma. It could only be a policy and a method promising certain results, and by those results it would have to be finally judged. Individuals might make of it a religion or incontrovertible creed. But no political organization, as long as it remained political, could do so."¹

This is exhaustive and clear enough. The methods of mass struggle are not given once and for all. They are a derivative of the political situation, of the goals and outcome of struggle and, I would add, of the opponent's behaviour. If he does not surrender, he is made to surrender by force of arms applied, if need be, in the name of humanism.

Political organisation is of tremendous importance for the forces of democracy and progress. Therefore the issue of an advanced political party and socialist state, as well as the attitude to them taken by the fighters for national freedom and social justice, is naturally in the focus of attention. On this matter, Gandhism cannot provide reliable guidance to the working people despite

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Mahatma Gandhi*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966, pp. 49-50.

the fact that Gandhi frequently and justly criticised the bourgeois state, bourgeois democracy and, especially, the colonial and racist state.

Scientific socialism regards the socialist state as the chief instrument in transforming society and the party as the only possible political organisation of like-minded people making it possible to prepare for and effect revolutionary changes. Scientific socialism sets the working people the complicated and mobilising task of organising themselves politically with reliance on the party, of solving, under its guidance and in their own favour, the problem of state power — the essential problem of any revolution — and thereby to acquire a powerful lever of influencing life and restructuring society in favour of the working and exploited people.

Gandhism proceeds from the anarchist conception of the state as indisputable evil. Even when Gandhi was compelled to admit that an independent nation-state could and should be used in the name of progress he still did not want to have anything to do with power for, in his view, any power was corrupting. Although Gandhism does not suggest that the working people should create their own political parties, it is not against their having organisations of comparatively primitive form. The political arena is thereby offered to the politically experienced representatives of the educated class, the bourgeois intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie itself. This disarms the working people in the face of the class adversary which enjoys state power and relies on an organised political party.

Gandhi was always in favour of involving the masses in the public movement, and he should be given the greatest credit for that. One can say without exaggeration that the Indian liberation movement's transfer from bourgeois loyalty to the colonialists, from respectful attitudes towards the British authorities that had been so characteristic of the Indian National Congress before Gandhi, from the petty-bourgeois terrorism of extreme nationalists to a genuine mass movement for independence, is associated with Gandhi, his anti-imperialist strategy and tactics and his straightforward appeal to the people. Yet, there is a difference between the ways Gandhism and scientific socialism interpret the role of the masses. The supporters of scientific socialism seek to awaken, develop and

make full use of the revolutionary potential of the masses, to encourage their initiative and to channel their revolutionary energies to diversified and purposeful forms of struggle. They believe in the masses, their revolutionary creativity, their ability not only to destroy what has become obsolete and is blocking progress, but also to create a new, exploitation-free society. By contrast, the Gandhists limit the action of the masses to non-violence. They see the masses as executors of the will of the leaders who should only act within the rigid framework of peaceful resistance. Gandhism has always been characterised by disbelief in the independent revolutionary creativity of the masses in the liberation movement. This explains why the Gandhists' attitude to the masses is defined by the trusteeship formula.

Gandhi was more capable than anyone else of raising the Indian masses against the colonialists. At the same time, no one was as skillful as Gandhi in preventing the masses from engaging in an open revolution or revolutionary action, thus securing for himself a possibility to negotiate with the colonial authorities. It is precisely these tactics that made him the most prominent leader of a bourgeoisie-led liberation movement. This has brought us to the basic difference between the two approaches to the working class. The Marxists-Leninists see it as a progressive class destined by history itself to play the leading role in the struggle for a socially just society. By contrast, Gandhi considered it to be an offspring of the "evil European civilisation", a class which allegedly was not mature enough to engage in political activity and unaware both of its own role in politics and the needs of the nation. While scientific socialism makes a point of relying primarily on the industrial proletariat, Gandhism sees it as a potential opponent of the non-violence principle and seeks to confine its struggle to demanding purely economic reforms designed to bring about a certain improvement in its material condition. In reference to strikes, Gandhi said, "I don't deny that such strikes can serve political ends. But they do not fall within the plan of non-violent non-cooperation. It does not require much effort of the intellect to perceive that it is a most dangerous thing to make political use of labour until labourers understand the political condition of the country and are prepared to work for the common good. This is hardly to

be expected of them all of a sudden and until they have bettered their own condition so as to enable them to keep body and soul together in a decent manner. The greatest political contribution, therefore, that labourers can make is to improve their own condition.”¹ This explains Gandhi's negative attitude towards creating an advanced political party of the proletariat.

The above fundamental principles of scientific socialism and Gandhism determined the attitude of the Indian ruling classes to both of them.

These classes are intolerant of scientific socialism which they have always regarded as a vehement enemy of the capitalist system. Their ideologists have always felt for Gandhism and even sought to assert it as a national ideology. And this despite Gandhi's and his followers' sincere subjective anti-capitalist sentiments. How can this be accounted for? The point is that, for all its anti-capitalist orientation, Gandhism proved to be, due to its above-mentioned qualities, of no harm to the capitalist development of India. It has become, as it were, part and parcel of the bourgeois order in modern India, which, in some sectors of the economy, has already reached the stage of monopoly capitalism. The ideologists of the bourgeoisie seek to find a new application for Gandhism — in defending modern social system against the encroachments on the part of the exploited classes.

The Gandhian methods of non-violent resistance turned out to be effective enough in the struggle against colonial oppression and for the country's national independence. Combined at times with extreme, violent methods of struggle used by the masses in defiance of Gandhi's teachings, they resulted in the establishment of an independent Indian state. Regrettably, after national independence had been reached, the Gandhian doctrine proved unable to substantially change the plight of hundreds of millions of working people.

The ruling classes of modern Indian society do their best to split the working-class movement and diminish the influence of the left-wing circles and of scientific socialism. Hence the bourgeoisie's efforts to combine the most diversified methods of class struggle, ranging

¹ Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India*. 1919-1922, S. Ganesan Publisher, Madras, 1922, pp. 737-739.

from political maneuvering to brutal reprisals, from the propaganda of the utopian ideas of Gandhism and "Indian socialism" to the terrorist policies of Shiv sena, a fascist organisation set up by the Bombay monopolists in order to intimidate working people. Thus, any effective application of Gandhian methods to promote the interests of the working people of today's India in defiance of the interests of the bourgeoisie can be observed only when the left-wingers launch mass Satyagraha campaigns in support of the working people's social, economic and political demands.

Present-day Gandhism has retained its general democratic features. This is especially important in the context of the intensive penetration of the US capital and ideology in India and the onslaught of Indian monopolies. A broad cooperation of democratic progressive forces is still possible within the framework of an anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly movement. Unfortunately after Gandhi's death Gandhism has been developing along different lines. •

In the post-war period and especially in the past few years, some of the non-Marxist ideological trends within the national liberation movement have been tending towards scientific socialism (national democracy). This cannot be said of Gandhism. Stressing the democratic content of Gandhism, one should not be blind to the fact that many of its followers today are unfortunately promoting its growing departure from scientific socialism.

* * *

One may not agree with Gandhism, but one should know, study and respect it as an important and objective phenomenon in Indian history.

Disagreement does not rule out respect. Gandhi himself set a good example. He did not share all the ideals of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia. He criticised Russian communists for their atheism and adherence to class struggle. At the same time, however, he recognised the justice and enormity of the goals set by the Russian communists and the greatness of Lenin as the leader of their revolution.

Gandhi's ideas and tactics did not foster the development of the Indian working people's *class* consciousness

and limited their possibility to influence, as a class, the course of the struggle for liberation. It should be recognised though that they were instrumental in involving the masses of the Indian people in the political movement headed by the national bourgeoisie. There can be no doubt about it. However, the fact that Gandhism was the motive force and the banner of a truly popular movement (although led by the bourgeoisie) shows that it matched the level of the country's social and economic development, the political awareness of the peasants, and the greater part of the Indian proletariat.

It was Gandhi who provided a link between the INC and the masses. That is why he was so important to the national bourgeoisie in its drive for power. There can be no doubt that Gandhi's political activity was in the interests of the Indian capitalists. This statement would be biased and incorrect if we fail to take into account the following two considerations.

First, in terms of gaining independence, the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie coincided with those of the entire nation. Everyone strove for the same political goal — national sovereignty. There were tactical and political differences concerning the role of the various classes and the importance of the social question for the national movement, that is concerning those issues which already in the course of the national struggle, predetermined the social essence of the Indian state. Thus Gandhi objectively assisted the bourgeoisie in promoting its class interests and, more importantly, helped to achieve the general national goals.

Secondly, Gandhi's stand objectively coincided with the interests of the national bourgeoisie. History made them fellow-travellers but not comrades-in-arms. The ideals that inspired Gandhi were not bourgeois but anti-bourgeois. In his life-style, disposition and social activity he was closer to the ordinary people than to the bourgeoisie. He predicted that at some point he would part ways with the INC and the national capitalists. Probably this process started in 1946-1948. The bourgeoisie had achieved its goals and now sought to become consolidated as a politically dominant class, whereas Gandhi's aim was to change the life of the Indian peasants and to all appearances he was prepared even to resort to non-violent resistance to do so.

Having played a major role in the history of India, Gandhi truly deserves to be called the father of the nation. He succeeded in organising and leading a truly massive liberation movement which, from time to time, shook the British administration and eventually brought about its collapse. The movement was truly national not only in terms of its goals, but also because it united all the ethnic groups, castes and religious communities. Gandhi was a determined advocate of the unity, coexistence and cooperation of India's entire population. His Satyagraha broke down ethnic, religious, caste and regional barriers. Gandhi campaigned for the unity of India and its people throughout his life starting with the first national Satyagraha that led to joint and concerted action of Hindus and Moslems through the struggle against the caste isolation, arrogance and discrimination against the untouchables especially intense in the 1930s and to the struggle against the Hindu-Moslem strife and for the country's territorial integrity in 1947 and 1948. Gandhi perished in this struggle. India's unity and independence were Gandhi's will.

Another concern that Gandhi passed on to his followers was the plight of the Indian working people. He had always sought to raise their living and cultural standards and liberate them from social exploitation. He was aware of their misery as he lived the same life as they did during the numerous Satyagraha campaigns. He mixed with them in the villages and factories, he travelled with them on the roads of India. He not only sympathised with people, but he seemed to suffer the same misery and misfortune that they did. It was not in his nature to tolerate injustice. In his view, the supreme goal of independence was improving the lives of hundreds of millions of poor people, rather than replacing "a white bureaucrat with a brown one" as he would put it. Hence his ideal of Sarvodaya, or communal socialism.

Apart from non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi's legacy includes India's independence, unity and Sarvodaya. Jawaharlal Nehru would also add to this list fearlessness (*abhaya*). This was a quality highly characteristic of Gandhi, a quality that ensured his determination in pursuing his goals. No matter how the opponents of social change might interpret Gandhi's principles, the potential they offer by way of promoting the interests of the

masses, democratic movement, and national and social progress is far from exhausted.

The Indian people hold Gandhi in high esteem. That is why his teachings should be studied in all their details and contradictions, thus ensuring a scientific approach to the analysis of Gandhism and those highly complicated social, economic and political problems that are facing India today.

* * *

The Soviet people respect Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi for his enormous contribution to the struggle against imperialism and colonialism, for the liberation of his country from foreign rule. People in the Soviet Union know that Gandhi was in the midst of the people, that he was inspired by the struggle against the British administration, by the selflessness and courage of the common people and that he sincerely worked towards improving their lives, protecting them against misery and urging them to strive for a new and better social system.

Decades of bitter struggle against British imperialism resulted in the victory of the Indian people. They will forever cherish the memory of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The Soviet people share the same respect for him as they have always admired the revolutionary and creative efforts of the masses.

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It should be emphasised that Gandhi's activities were never confined to the domain of domestic politics. He was a fervent supporter of friendship and cooperation among all countries and peoples. A profound thinker and, at the same time, a pragmatic politician, Gandhi firmly believed in the progressive development of humankind.

The Gandhian philosophy of non-violence rejects war as a means of resolving international conflicts. Gandhi was a sincere and consistent advocate of international peace.

Suffice it to recall that in his day, he denounced the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States in the final days of the Se-

cond World War. There can be no doubt that if Gandhi were among us in the days when the world is threatened with thermonuclear annihilation he would rank among the active opponents of the arms race.

Mahatma Gandhi was a passionate worker for peace and an uncompromising opponent of racism. He is one of those whose ideas lie in the basis of India's foreign policy of peace.

In our days the patriotic forces of the country rally around Gandhi's ideals in the determined struggle for peace, for the strengthening of India's independence and national unity.

**JAWAHARLAL
NEHRU**

An outstanding Indian politician and statesman and leader of the Indian National Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru was born on November 14, 1889 in Allahabad. He comes from a family of Kashmir Brahmans. His father, Motilal Nehru, an attorney, was a prominent figure among the reformists in the Indian National Congress.

Between 1905 and 1912 he lived in England and was educated first at Harrow and then at Cambridge, majoring in law.

In 1912 he joined the Indian National Congress. Since 1916 he was an active participant in the Indian national liberation movement. From 1919 when Mahatma Gandhi became leader of the INC, Jawaharlal Nehru was his supporter and close associate. In 1921 he was arrested for the first time for anti-British agitation. He spent a total of ten years in various prisons. More than once he was elected President of the Indian National Congress (1929-1930, 1936-1937, 1946, 1951-1954). In 1946 he became Vice-President of the Indian Interim Government under Viceroy's Executive Council.

Since 1947, when India gained independence and to the end of his days, he permanently held the posts of Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs. He believed that India's future lied in socialism, but just like Gandhi, thought that it could only be achieved through social compromise.

It was under Nehru's leadership that the Indian government carried out important measures aimed at eliminating economic backwardness inherited from India's colonial past. As chairman of the Planning Commission, Nehru participated in drawing up the first three Five-Year Plans.

In the domain of foreign policy, Nehru set a course for non-alignment with any of the blocs and for the peaceful

coexistence of states with different social systems. He participated in the elaboration of the five principles of peaceful coexistence among states known as Pancha Sila. He was among the initiators and participants of the Bandung Conference of Asian and African countries in 1955.

He was in favour of the comprehensive development of Indo-Soviet relations. During the Second World War he actively supported the Soviet Union. He visited the USSR in 1927, 1955 and 1961.

In 1955 he was decorated with the order of "Bharat Patna" (the Pearl of India). Posthumously, in October 1970, he was granted the highest award of the World Peace Council, the Frederick Joliot-Curie Gold Peace Medal.

He died in Delhi on May 27th, 1964, at the age of 75.

His contemporaries remember Jawaharlal Nehru as a prominent politician, an outstanding leader of the national liberation movement, a fighter for peace, democracy and social progress, a campaigner against social injustice and national oppression and a sincere friend of the Soviet Union.

The time that has elapsed since his death makes it possible to clearly assess his life's work and to objectively evaluate the importance and outcome of his diverse activities. The past years have been full of tempestuous historical events. The years have not spared many statesmen and party figures who, having left the political arena, have quickly lost the aura usually surrounding prominent leaders. This never happened to Jawaharlal Nehru. His image of an outstanding leader and one of the best proponents of the ideas of national liberation and social progress remains intact.

The interest in this outstanding figure has never waned. It is sustained thanks to Nehru's charisma which influenced not only those fortunate to meet him personally, but also those who familiarised themselves with his vast literary legacy and his extensive memoirs and scholarly writings. The main reason behind the sustained interest of researchers and writers in Nehru and his historical role lies in the fact that as a thinker he was concerned with many of the problems that are still of importance to the whole of mankind.

It would be naive to account for major historical developments by the activities of individuals; however, it is no accident that certain historical landmarks are associated with certain names and that these names are perceived as symbolising these developments. For instance, India's long struggle for independence that produced many known and unknown heroes and brilliant politicians of various trends and schools, is associated above all with the name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, while the emergence of an independent India is associated with the name of Jawaharlal Nehru. He more than anyone else contributed to the creation of the country's political system and political orientation. This cannot be changed by the attempts of certain Indian politicians to gain political capital from undermining the authority of India's first prime minister.

Throughout several decades, his name was inseparably linked with the struggle to liberate India from colonial slavery, to revive the country and turn it into a strong and sovereign state. Since August 15, 1947, when Nehru hoisted a tri-coloured national flag over the historic Red Fort in Delhi, and during the following seventeen years, he was at the helm of the independent Indian state, taking it along the road of innovation and the elimination of colonialism, age-old backwardness and vestiges of the feudal system.

It is under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru that the state system was reorganised. The country was divided into states according to ethnic and language groups. This put an end to the British administrative system based on the "divide and rule" principle and eliminated feudal fractionalism. The initial agrarian reforms undermined the system of large-scale land ownership. Nehru led the restructuring of the economy according to a system of state plans and laid a foundation for the policy of industrialisation as a decisive prerequisite for India's economic development. On his initiative a public sector was created in the economy which since then has been successfully developing.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a consistent democrat who fought for equality against the vestiges of caste traditions and religious-communal reactionaries. He upheld India's national unity based on the principles of democracy combined with centralism.

Nehru belongs not only to India. Proceeding in his policy from a number of tendencies typical of African and Asian states, he directly influenced the shaping of their domestic and foreign policies.

Nehru belongs to humanity. He was one of those who molded modern international relations characterised by a heightened activity of the newly-freed peoples. He was one of the founders of the policy of non-alignment and relaxation of international tensions. Although he expressed the aspirations of the people who rose up against the imperialist yoke, Nehru never contrasted them to the peoples of Europe and America. He never supported the ideas of isolation, national confrontation or revenge for the past. He believed that the whole of humanity shared the same fate. He welcomed the idea of closer East-West relations. Although he proved to be loyal to the left-wing national reformism of his younger days, nationalistic limitations and arrogance were alien to him. With all his heart he strove for equitable international cooperation. He was a staunch fighter against great-power chauvinism no matter what its origin or goals.

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Jawaharlal Nehru's political path was not a simple one. The beginning of his public career can be traced to the early 1920s, when he became actively involved in political life. As a student at a prestigious college in England, he was exposed to the ideas of bourgeois liberalism, which, by the way, were shared by his father Motilal Nehru, a prominent figure in the Indian national liberation movement. Inquisitive and drawn to innovation, Jawaharlal Nehru also showed interest in the socialist movement known to him, in those days, through its Fabian version. At the end of the First World War, the liberation movement in India experienced a revival. Nehru joined the Indian National Congress and embarked on a search for new forms and methods of national liberation struggle. He was deeply impressed by Gandhi, who was at that time taking his first steps on the Indian political arena, by his courage and energy, his appeal to the masses, his innovative methods of opposing the authorities and efforts to turn the INC from a political club into an efficient mass organisation. Nehru became a fervent supporter of Gandhi's

non-violent methods of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial struggle. He took an active part in the first national Satyagraha campaign, sharing Gandhi's and his associates' belief in the forthcoming victory. He felt frustrated when, in 1922, Gandhi called off the campaign, without accomplishing its task, and the national movement found itself in a deadlock. The belief in the Gandhian principles was undermined. Anxious about the state of the liberation movement, Nehru worked hard to restore the scattered forces of the INC and find a way out of the crisis.

That was his chief preoccupation when he again found himself in Europe and was invited to represent the INC at the Brussels Congress of the oppressed nations held in 1927. His participation in the Congress and the League Against Imperialism it set up, as well as his brief visit to the USSR in November 1927 were landmarks in Nehru's political evolution. In Brussels he met representatives of revolutionary and national liberation movements from Europe, Asia and Africa and became convinced of the community of their interests and the need for cooperation. He familiarised himself with revolutionary, scientific socialism. During the four days of his stay in the Soviet Union he was able to see that socialism ceased to be a pure theory and started to be translated into life.

Nehru's attitude to fascism was indicative of his political insight and ability to assess the nature of and prospects for certain international developments. It would be relevant to cite in this connection Nehru's well-known statement issued to the press at the end of 1933, when fascism was establishing itself as political power in Germany: "I do believe that fundamentally the choice before the world today is one between some form of communism and some forms of fascism, and I am all for the former, that is communism... One has to choose between the two and I choose the communist ideal... I do think that the basic ideology of communism and its scientific interpretation of history are sound."¹

Nehru's opting for the communist ideology is another proof of his foresight, sound judgement and uncompromising support to progressive theories and practice. Let us recall that already at the beginning of his political

¹ S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, Communist Party Publication, New Delhi, 1967, p. 67.

career he was influenced by the ideas of the October Socialist Revolution and declared that their unbiased and critical study would contribute to the resolution of problems that faced his own country. Since then his interest in "communist experiment" in the Soviet Union never waned.

This inspired him to study scientific socialism, works by Marx, Engels and Lenin. His studies largely moulded his world outlook, pushing into the background not only his amorphous liberal and social-reformist notions, but also his firm, albeit not always unquestionable, Gandhian convictions. The influence that Marxism exerted on Nehru also manifested itself in his interpretation of certain practical problems and some of his pronouncements are traceable to his study of the principles of proletarian ideology. Proofs of that can be found in his *An Autobiography*, *The Discovery of India* and *Glimpses of World History*. In his *An Autobiography*, for instance, he wrote, "the theory and philosophy of Marxism lightened up many a dark corner of my mind. History came to have a new meaning for me. The Marxist interpretation threw a flood of light on it, and it became an unfolding drama with some order and purpose, however unconscious, behind it... It was the essential freedom from dogma and the scientific outlook of Marxism that appealed to me."¹ This is echoed in *The Discovery of India*, "A study of Marx and Lenin produced a powerful effect on my mind and helped me to see history and current affairs in a new light. The long chain of history and of social development appeared to have some meaning, some sequence, and the future lost some of its obscurity."² The chapter on Marxism in his *Glimpses of World History* sets forth the teachings of Marx and Lenin and speaks of Nehru's feeling for Marxism-Leninism and of its influence on his own thinking.³

When speaking on the effect of Marxism on the world outlook of Jawaharlal Nehru, one should bear in mind that it was not all-decisive and comprehensive. Nonetheless, the effect of Marxism can be seen in a certain radicalisation of his views (which became increasingly realistic), as well as in his support to the ideals of social-

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 362-363.

² Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964, p. 29.

³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, pp. 561-567.

ism. Nehru firmly believed that only socialism could get the future India out of the socio-economic impasse caused by its former colonial enslavement. He spoke about this in no uncertain terms at the session of the Indian National Congress held in 1936 in Lucknow, "I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word, I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense... I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interests in land and industry... That means the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of co-operative service... In short, it means a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order."¹

The impact of Marxism-Leninism on Nehru's views never turned him, however, into a materialist philosopher. His attitude to the philosophical problems of being and consciousness, to the theory of cognition and the spiritual and moral development of the individual reveals a mixture of idealism and agnosticism and points to his adherence to the religious and ethical traditions of Hinduism and European rationalistic scepticism. As for his approach to socio-political problems, it was strongly and fruitfully influenced by scientific socialism. Nehru largely accepted the Marxist economic interpretation of history with its focus on the mode of production, the role of the people, the social structure, class contradictions and class struggle. He regarded history as a patterned development from lower to higher socio-economic formations. He realised that the triumph of socialism was inevitable. He saw that capitalism as a system was doomed. He was certainly aware of the suppressive nature of its economic, social and political system, condemning the methods of imperialist exploitation, and displayed his feeling for the revolutionary forces throughout the world and especially for the world's first socialist state.

In terms of Nehru's political activity, the influence of

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Freedom*, Unwin Books, London, 1926, p. 35.

Marxism-Leninism can be seen in his realisation of the limited nature of the nationalist movement and his insistence on channeling it towards defending the working people's interests and laying the foundation for radical social reforms. Nehru openly proclaimed himself a supporter of scientific socialism and declared that socialism was the ultimate goal of the liberation movement. He sought to increase the participation of peasants and workers in the INC, to turn them into its mainstay and to promote the struggle for their social and economic demands. While the majority of the INC, discouraged by the defeat suffered in 1922, were prepared to agree to the dominion status for India, Nehru unswervingly worked for India's full independence.

Nehru upheld international solidarity and cooperation with the peoples fighting against colonialism, with working-class and democratic movements in capitalist countries, and with the Soviet Union as a staunch fighter against imperialism and a loyal friend of the oppressed peoples.

The political platform that Nehru set forth in the late 1920s turned him into the leader of the INC's rapidly growing left wing. Revolutionary and socialist tendencies had a growing impact on Nehru's world outlook up to the mid-1930s. It was a period when he elaborated and advocated a programme which largely anticipated and in some respects outstripped that of national democracy in the 1960s.

Nonetheless, Nehru's position was highly complicated. There was no political organisation of like-minded people on which he could rely. He functioned within the framework of the INC which basically remained a bourgeois institution. Gandhi enjoyed supreme moral influence among the Congress members, and, as is known, on many occasions he supported right-wing and conservative elements of the Congress in their struggle to perpetuate their positions and rebuff the attacks and claims of the revolutionary youth. Nehru played a dual role. On the one hand, he was the leader of the INC left wing, on the other hand, he enjoyed Gandhi's confidence and love and was linked to him through very special personal bonds which could not be severed by any political differences. He maintained contacts with the right-wing leaders of the Congress. In Gandhi's opinion, Jawaharlal Nehru was not

only the spokesman of the Left, but also a universally recognised political leader of the Congress who was capable of retaining within its limits the radical elements with their drive for expansion, influence and even full control over the Congress. Nehru, too, strove after the unity of the Congress. For him, political movement in India was inconceivable without Gandhi or in defiance of his will. However, while working for unity, he hoped to exert a revolutionary and socialist influence on Gandhi and the conservative majority of the INC. Gandhi and Nehru were both right in protecting the INC unity: a split would have done irreparable harm to the anti-imperialist forces. However, Nehru failed to urge the Congress to accept his ideas. Yielding to the pressure from Gandhi and trusting his intuition, he allowed the right-wingers to neutralise the effect of the revolutionary-sounding declarations. The right-wingers countered the left offensive by involving the participants in the Tripura Session of the Congress in a battle that threatened the INC with a split. Nehru felt that in view of the right-wing intransigence his adherence to his platform could undermine the national unity. He opted for a compromise, and since the late 1930s the socialist and revolutionary tendencies in his activity started to wane.

This became especially obvious when India achieved independence and Nehru was put at the head of its government. His socio-political views underwent a considerable change, Marxist-Leninist ideas fading into the background, disappearing almost completely in practical matters and manifesting themselves only in his abstract, most general evaluations of the socio-historical process. The ideas of liberalism and social reformism synthesised with Gandhism prevailed. Gandhi's prophecy to the effect that when he died Nehru would speak his language came true.

When Nehru became Prime Minister, the term "socialism" disappeared from his political lexicon to reappear in the mid-1950s in a different — reformist, rather than revolutionary or national-democratic — interpretation. Nehru elaborated a programme for the domestic policy of a progressive, anti-imperialist, developing nation. The programme did not go beyond the confines of national reformism and posed no threat to the national bourgeoisie which retained its dominant economic and political position.

It would be easy to rebuke Nehru with being inconsistent. In principle, he might deserve criticism, but his critics would never be convincing and justified if they failed to take into account the role he played in India's recent history, the role determined and limited by the objective factors of which Nehru was aware.

Nehru's world outlook since the 1930s and until the end of his days manifests profound contradictions of objective nature. His views, as he put it, outstripped the political consciousness of the INC. It so happened that a subjective socialist headed a bourgeois political organisation. The unity of theory and practice is extremely important for a revolutionary. Nehru strove after it, especially in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Working for the INC, the bureaucratic hierarchy of which was controlled by the right-wing leaders, and heading the state machinery which had not yet eliminated the vicious vestiges of the colonial times, he was in no position to translate his ideas into life.

In the realm of theory, one can hold an uncompromising position. As distinct from politics, this does not bring about pernicious results. What could have happened had Nehru not failed, since the 1930s, to be more persistent in upholding his views and had he not accepted a compromise with Gandhi and the INC right-wingers? He would have never been able to overcome Gandhi's will and the Congress right-wingers' influence, he would have never been able to saddle them with his policy. He would have shared the unhappy fate of S. Ch. Bose, aligning with M. N. Roy or other representatives of the leftist adventurist trend. Had he succeeded in setting up a political organisation capable of competing with the INC, it would have weakened the anti-imperialist front, playing into the hands of the British colonialists.

According to what Nehru said in the late 1940s, he was a supporter of socialism but refrained from setting the nation socialist goals because they would not be shared by the majority in the INC. He would have never retained his post of India's Prime Minister and head of the Congress government had he repeated, in the 1940s, the speech he made at the INC session in Lucknow in 1936, when he came out in favour of scientific socialism. It took him nearly ten years to get the public opinion ready for the moderate, reformist idea of the so-called socialist pattern of society which he regarded as a panacea for capitalism.

Nehru was right in sensing that in those days socialism could not be put on the Indian agenda and that the country needed a transitional period of preparation for future socialist change. Nehru never specified the length of that period, its goals, and its alignment of class forces. He never created organisational, political or ideological prerequisites for socialism. In the INC propaganda, the notion of socialism was extremely vague and deprived of its class content. In essence, socialism was equated to a planned development, the public sector, economic growth and a certain rise in the working people's welfare. It was seen as a declaration of the "principle of equal opportunities" for all the citizens of the country. Nehru's policy did not undermine the mainstays of capitalism in India, neither did it oust the Indian monopolies from the scene, nor did it resolve the bitter social contradictions. On the contrary — and that was recognised by Nehru himself — the contrast between the wealthy and the poor had become more dramatic and monopoly capital grew stronger.

When summing up the results of Nehru's activity as the head of Indian government, one should emphasise that he did a lot to achieve a rise in the national economy, industrialise the country, set up the public sector, make progress in education and health care, and to put an end to large and medium-scale feudal land ownership. However, he effected all that along bourgeois lines. He failed to give land to the landless, and the age-long dream of the Indian peasant never came true. He actively and successfully contributed to the strengthening of the bourgeois-democratic, secular state. He forged a sensible foreign policy which won India the reputation of a peace-loving state. The reactionaries were in no position to change Nehru's course. The overall result of Nehru's work was undoubtedly positive. However, socialism, which he liked to speak about, remained a good intention.

Nehru could not set about effecting socialist changes in India right away for the absence of political prerequisites for that. Life called for an uneasy compromise with the bourgeois and conservative circles. The compromise somewhat blunted the feeling of social justice and compelled Nehru to revise his former revolutionary-democratic ideas.

A real alternative to Nehru's course both in his own lifetime and after his death was offered not by the revolution-

ary left-wing government, but by a right-wing one. He prevented a shift to the right and undermined the positions of conservatives and social reaction in India. Here his noble role was displayed and his historic service to the nation rendered.

For all the contradictions and social limitations of Nehru's stand, in people's memory his name is associated with India's progressive development.

* * *

Nehru did not confine his activity to the domain of politics. He was a man of profound learning, refined culture and a philosophical turn of mind. His literary legacy is enormous. It brings into sharp focus his universal knowledge, broad interests, the originality and keenness of thought combined with great warmth, quick temperament and spontaneous reactions of a person who was forever engaged in a quest for truth, a person who was capable of doubt and retreat, but never lost his belief in the progress of mankind. Nehru was a thinker and a poet. Had he not been noted for his outstanding political activity, he would still have secured for himself the attention and interest of posterity through his writing. His literary career cannot be separated from his political biography. He once said, "The more action and thought are allied and integrated, the more effective they become... The happiest man is he whose thinking and action are co-ordinated."¹ For him, historical and philosophical meditation was not an end in itself, but a search for an answer to the questions that worried his own nation and entire humankind. Nehru turned to the past in order to understand the present and foresee the future.

This determined the angle from which his first two books to be published in Russian—*The Discovery of India* and *An Autobiography*—were written. Put out more than thirty years ago, they caused a great interest of the Soviet readership and broadened their knowledge of India's past and present.

The same can be said of his *Glimpses of World History*.

¹ *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches. March 1953-August 1957*, Vol. Three, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Calcutta, 1958, p. 472.

Broader in its range, this book describes the development of human society on a global scale with a special emphasis on the landmarks in world history. The author singles out and generalises the main aspects of the historical process. The history of India is presented against the background of developments in other countries and parts of the world and offers sufficient ground for comparison. This is a highly original and profound work by a historian. It is not an academic study, though. Just as he did in *The Discovery of India*, Nehru tried to conceptualise his nation's past looking at it from the point of view of world history. This allowed him to have a clear view of its present and to outline ways towards a change. Nehru was interested in the past primarily because it showed a way to the future. For him, history was a school of life, experience, and struggle, an instrument in moulding people's world outlook. Nehru treats it as an active politician who took up research for practical reasons. He once said, "My fascination for history was not in reading about odd events that happened in the past rather in its relation to the things that led up to the present. Only then did it become alive to me. Otherwise it would have been an odd thing unconnected with my life or the world."¹

One could not but admire his *Glimpses of World History*; a picture of the past presented by a person who was among the recognised leaders of national liberation movement, headed the independent Indian state and exerted a great influence on its present and future.

One should perceive Nehru's view of history the way he approached it — by focusing on those points which have preserved their importance today and outlined the future.

He was a rationalist in the way he regarded the history of humanity and his own country. What he was looking for in it was its intrinsic meaning and logic of development. He never approached it with *a priori*, non-historical categories. This also determined his attitude to his country's past. Uncritical admiration of the old days was alien to him. He never indulged in discourse about the exclusiveness or uniqueness of India's history as something governed by spiritual laws typical of India alone. One is also attracted by the fact that Nehru's views were free from the bondage of

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru's *Speeches. 1949-1953*, Vol. Two, Delhi, 1957, p. 383.

religious or moral mysticism widespread in India. The traditions of European rationalism and European spiritual culture critically studied and mastered by Nehru as a person who had received traditional European upbringing and education shaped his ideas of social development as applied to India and helped him to rid himself of partiality and idealisation. They helped him to compare his country to other countries and see it the way it really was. In his *The Discovery of India* he wrote, "India was in my blood and there was much in her that instinctively thrilled me. And yet I approached her almost as an alien critic, full of dislike for the present as well as for many of the relics of the past that I saw. To some extent I came to her via the West, and looked at her as a friendly westerner might have done."¹

Having discovered the futility of searching for the meaning of history outside history itself, Nehru became convinced of the law-governed nature of historical development and thereby made a significant step forward towards a realistic, almost materialist, interpretation of the historical process. He wrote, "In Asia, many historical forces have been at work for many years past and many things have happened which are good and many things which are not so good, as always happens when impersonal historical forces are in action. They are still an action. We try to mould them a little, to divert them here and there, but essentially they will carry on till they fulfil their purpose and their historical destiny."² The realisation of the existence of objective regularities of development helped him to become aware of the upwards, spiral-like development of the historical process understood as an objective and progressive course of events, as an ascent from the lowest to the highest.

These elements in Nehru's world outlook had a positive effect on his political activity. He approached it not as a voluntarist, not as a moralist, not from the point of view of religious imperatives, but as a scholar. He checked his actions against the objectively necessary course of history and the progressive tendencies. Nehru forged a well-sub-

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 51.

² Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy. Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi, 1961, p. 256.

stantiated and realistic political line and conducted political struggle in accordance with the call of the times, the imperative predetermined by the entire course of mankind's previous development. He was a consistent advocate of the progressive scientific concept according to which the people is the true maker of history while the activity of political leaders is something to be subordinated to the struggle to meet the aspirations and needs of the masses. Nehru emphasised, "The people were the principal actors, and behind them, pushing them on, were great historical urges... But for that historical setting and political and social urges, no leaders or agitators could have inspired them to action." ¹

Jawaharlal Nehru's world outlook was shaped by the influence of various schools of thought. The influence of scientific socialism can best be seen in his views of the patterned development of history and the role of masses in it.

A simplistic approach to the study of Jawaharlal Nehru's views is inadmissible. Characteristic of him was the urge to learn and master as much of humanity's experience as possible and to pick up what was best about it. Sometimes, in his political struggle he relied on principles borrowed from various philosophical systems and that naturally made him blind to their irreconcilable, antagonistic aspects. This inevitably led to eclecticism he tried to avoid at any cost, though. He preferred "a mental or spiritual attitude which synthesizes differences and contradictions, tries to understand and accommodate different religions, ideologies, political, social and economic systems..." ²

No one has ever succeeded in synthesising ideologies. Nehru understood that very well. Neither could contradictory elements be reconciled and united in his own world outlook. No one can ever unite what is antagonistic and opposite from the class point of view. Nehru often had to self-critically revise his own ideological structures so as to make progress and improve his own ideas. The direction and tendency of his political and social quest were fruitful and have retained their importance today. In his search for an answer to the topical questions posed by the anti-im-

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 286.

² *The Mind of Mr. Nehru. An Interview by R. K. Karanjia*, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1961, p. 89.

perialist struggle and by the efforts to shape the future of formerly colonial countries Nehru sought to keep pace with the time.

He relied on the traditions of India's ancient culture and its rich history of national liberation movement, in particular, on the philosophy and practice of Gandhism. He mastered everything that could be offered by West European bourgeois liberalism. Educated in Britain, the cradle of liberalism, he was disappointed by the latter and turned to socialist ideas, first known to him in their Fabian version. Fascinated by the ideals of equality and social justice, he trained his critical, inquisitive mind for the perception of many of the concepts of scientific socialism. He eagerly studied the theory and practice of scientific socialism and found that they offered much to be applied in India. He was among the first leaders of the national liberation movement to talk about the importance of Marxism-Leninism and to discover that this science revealed the logic of historical development and the needs and demands of the times.

It was not only as a theory that scientific socialism appealed to Nehru. The appeal was especially strong because Nehru was fascinated by the experiment in the revolutionary transformation of the old world conducted in the Soviet Union. In his *An Autobiography* he wrote, "While the rest of the world was in the grip of the depression and going backward in some ways, in the Soviet country a great new world was being built up before our eyes. Russia, following the great Lenin, looked into the future and thought only of what was to be, while the other countries lay numbed under the dead head of the past and spent their energy in preserving the useless relics of a bygone age. In particular, I was impressed by the reports of the great progress made by the backward regions of Central Asia under the Soviet régime. In the balance, therefore, I was all in favour of Russia, and the presence and example of the Soviets was a bright and heartening phenomenon in a dark and dismal world."¹

Nehru closely followed social changes in the Soviet Union. He first visited the USSR together with his father Motilal Nehru, a prominent figure in the INC, as early as 1927, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Soviet power. What he saw in the country brought about the following

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 361-362.

conclusion, that "the Soviet Revolution has advanced human society by a great leap and had lit a bright flame which could not be smothered, and that it had laid the foundations for that new civilization towards which the world could advance."¹

Characteristic was Jawaharlal Nehru's profound interest in Lenin, his personality, his theoretical and practical work. Assessing Lenin's role in history, Nehru wrote that "millions have considered him as a Saviour and the greatest man of the age".² He described Lenin as a great mind and a genius of revolution.³

For Nehru, the ideal lay in the unity of thought and action, theory and practice. The impact of the ideas of scientific socialism and the achievements gained by the USSR, which he thought highly of, brought him to the recognition of the need to effect radical social and economic reforms in India and to proclaim socialism first as an ideal social system and then as the ultimate goal of political activity.

Nehru saw the socialist transformation of society as a natural result of mankind's historical development. He emphasised that capitalism was "out of place today in the world" and that the world had outgrown it. He pointed out that "the scientific and technological revolution brought the need for socialism into sharp focus and that what was meant by a modern scientific approach was actually a socialist approach."⁴

Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the first leaders of the anti-colonial movement to see clearly that the advancement towards socialism was a specific need of the newly-free countries, an objectively predetermined road of their progress following their liberation from the imperialist yoke, India included. In advancing and substantiating this thesis Nehru anticipated many of the statements later made by political leaders in Asia and Africa. Jawaharlal Nehru indicated that capitalism was unacceptable for the newly-free countries and that they did not have time enough to achieve progress by the same methods and at the same pace as the Western world had done. He said,

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 307.

³ See: Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, p. 638.

⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India Today and Tomorrow*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, 1959, p. 20.

“Which way have we to go? Are we to follow the English, French and the American way? Have we time of 100 to 150 years to reach our destination? This is impossible. We will perish in the process.”¹

In his well-known article “The Basic Approach” Nehru emphasised that only socialism could make it possible for the formerly colonial nations to liberate themselves from the grip of backwardness. He wrote, “It has to be remembered that it is not by some magic adoption of socialist or capitalist method that poverty suddenly leads to riches. The only way is through hard work and increasing the productivity of the nation and organising an equitable distribution of its products. It is a lengthy and difficult process. In a poorly developed country, the capitalist method offers no chance. It is only through a planned approach on socialistic lines that steady progress can be attained though even that will take time.”²

Nehru’s sympathy for socialism was a reflection of a major breakthrough in the development of democratic social thought in India that took place first under the impact of the victory of the October Revolution and successes in the building of socialism in the USSR and then under the influence of the victory over German Nazism and Japanese militarism in the Second World War that opened up for India the possibility to successfully complete its national liberation struggle.

In his statements on the socio-economic programme of the INC as the ruling party of independent India, Nehru focused on the need for industrialisation and introduction of state planning as a prerequisite for independent national development and a rise in economic growth and people’s well-being. He said, “Broadly our objective is to establish a Welfare State with a socialist pattern of society, with no great disparities of income and offering an equal opportunity to all.”³

Nehru recognised the objective need for restructuring Indian society along socialist lines. In his understanding of the process, forms and methods of restructuring, though, he proved himself to be, in a large measure, a subjective

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Towards a Socialist Order*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, 1956, p. 64.

² *World Marxist Review*, December 1958, No. 4, p. 42.

³ *Jawaharlal Nehru’s Speeches, September 1957-April 1963*, Vol. Four, Bombay, Delhi, 1961, p. 151.

idealist. The specificity of his understanding of the process was determined by the highly complicated tangle of class contradictions typical of modern India, by the variety of modes of life existing in the country and, most importantly, by Nehru's underestimation of the special role to be played by the working class as the proponent of the ideology of scientific socialism. The alignment of class forces in the anti-colonial movement and, later, in independent India limited the possibility for Nehru to translate his subjective ideals into life.

The tremendous scope of outstanding general democratic tasks that faced India and created a basis for the broad unity of national forces necessarily influenced Nehru's ideas and, especially, his practical policy. Nehru often absolutised, as it were, the temporary alignment of the classes conditioned by a certain stage in the democratic movement and corresponding to the goals of this stage. It was not a lasting alignment, especially in terms of effecting socialist changes. Nehru failed, as it were, to go beyond the limits of the general democratic stage of the revolution in his analysis of Indian society; he failed to recognise that the struggle for socialism calls for a radically different class orientation and that during the transition from general democratic goals to socialist ones, the content, composition and balance of the elements in the united national front supporting the anti-imperialist movement had to undergo significant change.

Nehru recognised the existence of classes and class struggle. However, in the latter period of his life he advanced his basic thesis according to which it was possible to resolve class contradictions by way of compromise and reform grounded on cooperation among classes. He believed that persuasion was enough to counter the growing influence exerted by the exploiter classes of the country's economic and political life. One cannot fail to see this thesis as an echo of the liberal-bourgeois ideas and utopian moral concepts advocated by Gandhi.

These ideas and concepts provided the ground for Jawaharlal Nehru's unjustified, subjective criticism of certain periods in the history of the Soviet Union, certain precepts in the theory of scientific socialism and of the communist movement in India. Here lies a far-reaching contradiction that was characteristic of Nehru's world outlook and that he never managed, for all his efforts,

to overcome. The relatively long period of the isolation of India, its social thought and Nehru himself from the achievements of the Marxist-Leninist theory and the practice of building socialism in the USSR and other countries also limited the possibility of his fully grasping the essence of the processes involved in the formation of a new, socialist world which Nehru, despite all his subjectivism and for all his reservations, was gradually coming to accept. This is especially true of the concepts of class struggle and the guiding role played by the working class.

On the one hand, Nehru recognised the Marxist interpretation of history based on the exposure of class antagonisms as correct and scientifically substantiated. In his *Glimpses of World History* he wrote, "Marx constantly talks of exploitation and class struggles... But according to Marx, this is not a matter for anger or good virtuous advice. The exploitation is not the fault of the person exploiting. The dominance of one class over another has been the natural result of historical progress... Marx did not preach class conflict. He showed that in fact it existed, and had always existed in some form or other." ¹ "Individuals may be converted, they may surrender their special privileges, although this is rare enough, but classes and groups do not do so. The attempt to convert a governing and privileged class into forsaking power and giving up its unjust privileges has therefore always so far failed, and there seems to be no reason whatever to hold that it will succeed in the future." ²

At the same time, however, in the 1950s and 1960s Nehru sought to reconcile the recognition of class struggle with the Gandhian concept of class harmony, thus contradicting his own realistic assessments of earlier years. He stressed that he and his associates wanted to resolve this problem by peaceful means and on the basis of cooperation, without rejecting or closing their eyes, though, to the contradictions between classes. He said that they wanted to neutralise, rather than exacerbate, class conflicts, to win over more and more people to their side instead of threatening them with a fight and eventual destruction. The theory of class conflicts and wars, he

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, p. 565.

² Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 544.

maintained, was outdated because it came to be too dangerous in the current context.

Let us dismiss Nehru's way of confusing or even equating class struggle and war, and opposing, in absolute terms, non-violence to violence, and peaceful resolution of class contradictions to non-peaceful resolution. I feel that the above mirrors not so much the evolution of Nehru's beliefs towards the end of his life as a pragmatic need, stemming from the political course, largely determined by the conservatives among the leaders of the multiclass, extremely heterogeneous ruling party — the Indian National Congress. In those days the conservative influence was on the rise and eventually led to a split in the INC.

However, the practice of political struggle, as well as the country's socio-economic development had an inevitable impact on Nehru's views. It did not corroborate the concept of class cooperation and the possibility of "re-educating" of Indian landlords and capitalists. On the contrary, it abounded in sharp, bitter social conflicts in the course of which the privileged classes resorted to any means of suppressing working people's protests and to all sorts of open violence applied in the name of the propertied classes' interests.

The upsurge in the class struggle, his own sincere feeling for the oppressed and the desire to change their lives for the better, as well as his firm subjective loyalty to socialist ideals compelled Nehru to go back to his more sober assessment of the far-reaching, objective character of the class contradictions rampant in Indian society.

In the final analysis, Nehru recognised the existence of "privileged groups and classes" that countered reform in India. He pointed out that in order to defend their own mercenary interests these social groups (ranking among them, in his view, were not only semi-feudal landowners but, above all, the big monopoly capitalists) could resist the country's social progress. For all the socialist slogans put forward by the Indian National Congress, Nehru did not idealise Indian society. Remaining highly realistic in its assessment, he pointed out, "It is a capitalistic economy with a great deal of State control or a capitalistic economy plus a public sector directly under the State. But it is essentially a capitalistic economy."¹

¹ *AICC Economic Review*, November 15, 1957, p. 6.

Nehru was aware of the threat posed to the country's socialist course of development, progress and democracy not only by the traditional religious and communal strife and the sway of feudal landowners, but also by the growing power of monopolies. Shortly before his death, in the autumn of 1963, he wrote, "To the extent it has grown during the last few years, we have drifted away from the goal of socialism... Monopoly is the enemy of socialism." ¹

* * *

Jawaharlal Nehru's views of foreign policy were consistently progressive. In the post-war years, both as a thinker and statesman, he made important contributions to the struggle against imperialism, to the assurance of universal peace, and to changing the balance of forces in the world arena in favour of the forces of national liberation, progress and socialism.

Nehru never was narrowly pragmatic in foreign policy and policy in general. For him, the criterion to assess its correctness lay not in the immediate benefit, but in lofty social, historical and ethical ideals. The broadness of his views and a sound knowledge of the history and the current state of international relations made it possible for Nehru to forge a progressive political course, one that promoted national interests, set an example for many other developing countries and helped to consolidate the forces of peace and social progress in the world arena.

Nehru regarded the attainment of universal peace and prevention of nuclear disaster as the most important, top-priority task for the whole of humanity. He emphasised that this was equally important for all countries, big and small alike, in all parts of the world, no matter what their social systems and political orientation were. Nehru warned people against the illusion of a possibility to avoid involvement in a potential world conflict. He said, "Now the whole world hangs together in life and death." ²

"Thus, how can we solve our problems if peace itself is in danger?" he asked. "So our primary consideration is peace." ³

¹ *Congress Bulletin*, 1963, No. 9-10, p. 55.

² *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. Two, Delhi, 1967, p. 384.

³ *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. Three, New Delhi, 1970, p. 288.

Nehru was perfectly aware of the ominous danger of nuclear death looming over the world. He never belonged to the people who are afraid to see the truth and who shrug off real danger. However, he did not share the fatalistic attitudes, he believed in the power of reason and was of the opinion that much about the fate of mankind depends on the stand taken by politicians, on public movements and on people's understanding of reality. Nehru said that he did not believe that war was inevitable, though it presented a great danger. "But look at the picture of the world," he said. "We live on the verge of disaster... Also for the first time in the world's history we are faced with a new possibility and a new contingency."¹

Nehru resolutely opposed the idea of inevitable war that couldn't but lead to preparations for it, to sliding towards it. In his view, a policy designed to use nuclear arms as a means to resolve international problems and conflicts ran counter to common sense and was extremely dangerous.

Nehru believed that the stockpiling of vast amounts of weapons of mass destruction dictated a certain political restraint. He felt that the world was threatened by the unsteady balance based on power and fear. For this balance not to be upset by some reckless act it had to be replaced, he maintained, by a balance based on mutual understanding, respect and disarmament, above all nuclear disarmament. In his opinion not only the use of nuclear arms, but also its testing that polluted the atmosphere and was fraught with dangerous genetic consequences ran counter to morality and international law.² Nehru considered that the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water concluded by the USSR, USA and Great Britain in 1963 to be an historical act opening up the possibility for progress towards disarmament.

For further progress in this direction to take place it was necessary to put an end to the cold war. Nehru stressed that it increased tension in international relations and could eventually lead to an armed clash.³ He called

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

² *Ibid.*, p. 511.

³ *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. Two, p. 30.

for the creation of a "climate of peace", to give up mutual accusations and hostile propaganda, replacing them with contacts and negotiations in the spirit of constraint and tolerance. He played an outstanding role in creating the psychological atmosphere of detente and in drawing the formerly conflicting points of view closer together. He made an appreciable contribution to the resolution of a number of acute international conflicts.

Pursuing a policy of peaceful coexistence, Nehru stressed India's loyalty to the principles of non-violence and Mahatma Gandhi's traditions. In doing so, he pointed out two considerations. First, adherence to the principles of non-violence was not to be identified with pacifism. The Republic of India was building up its armed forces and was ready to apply them, if need be. Second, in international affairs, the principle of non-violence should not lead to passivity and reconciliation with evil. On the contrary, Nehru believed that a just resolution of disputes, the true freedom of all the states, intolerance of interference into their internal affairs and elimination of colonialism and racism were the necessary prerequisites for a true and stable peace.

Nehru's striving for peace by no means weakened the anti-imperialist potential of his foreign policy. He didn't want to buy peace at the price of his own country's and other countries' freedom. His anti-colonialism was not confined to the proclamation of his country's political sovereignty, as sometimes was the case in other developing countries. He remained a consistent anti-imperialist to the end of his days.

His experience of fighting for his nation's independence, made it possible for Nehru to gain an insight into the essence of imperialism's colonial system that deprived the oppressed nations of their political sovereignty and ruthlessly destroyed their traditions. In 1930, he wrote, "The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually."¹

¹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. Four, Sujit Mukherjee Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi, 1973, p. 216.

By destroying local cottage industry, the British authorities raised obstacles in the way of creating large-scale machine industry in India. The development of capitalist production and introduction of advanced technology in the West called for the preservation or imposition of the most backward, feudal forms of exploitation in the colonies. Therefore, as Nehru wrote in 1936, the British government "far from looking towards any form of socialism or control or divesting of vested interests, it has deliberately protected numerous vested interests, created fresh ones and invariably sided with the political, social and religious reactionaries in India."¹ Among the latter were the *zamindars*, big landowners, whose prosperity depended on colonial administration and who supported it in every way. As early as the late 1920s, impressed by the Marxist materialist interpretation of history, Nehru understood that colonialism was engendered not only by the policy of conquest, but also by the entire capitalist mode of production. He said that "this world imperialism is the direct outcome of a system of a society which prevails in the greater part of the world today and is called capitalism... Capitalism necessarily leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another, and one country by another."² Nehru pointed to the new forms of "economic imperialism" which were not associated with any formal violation of sovereignty. He pointed out that such forms were especially typical of the United States which, relying on the experience of other imperialist countries and learning from their failures and defeats, improved the old methods of exploitation and created an "invisible empire".³

It was an especially topical subject in the 1950s and 1960s when the traditional system of colonialism was tumbling down. Nehru was among those leaders of newly-free states who were endowed with foresight and called for vigilance, stressing that the proclamation of independence

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters. Written Mostly to Jawaharlal Nehru and Some Written by Him*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960, p. 149.

² *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. Three, 1972, pp. 206, 371.

³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, p. 494.

did not yet put an end to imperialist exploitation but only concealed and modified it, allowing it to take on various neocolonialist forms. In 1956 Nehru said, "So the poor countries remain poor and the rich countries become richer and richer, with more surplus, more investment, more production." ¹ "Imperialism or colonialism suppressed and suppresses the progressive social forces. Inevitably it aligns itself with certain privileged groups or classes because it is interested in preserving the social and economic *status quo*. Even after a country has become independent, it may continue to be economically dependent on other countries. This kind of thing is euphemistically called having close cultural and economic ties." ² Nehru condemned political machinations and acts of the imperialist circles' overt interference in the life of young states. He was indignant about the scandalous behaviour of Western powers in the Congo and renounced the colonialist policies of fascist Portugal not only in India, but also in Africa. He supported the people's struggle for independence in Portuguese colonies and the UN decisions that sanctioned their struggle and outlawed the Portuguese colonialists. Nehru condemned the Western powers' support of colonial Portugal and the latter's conspiracy with the racist regimes of South Africa and Northern Rhodesia. He expressed solidarity with the fighters against colonialism, neocolonialism, racism and apartheid. He was in favour of creating an international climate discouraging all violence and the oppression of nations. Nehru regarded the cold war as one of the factors preventing the elimination of colonial exploitation. He stressed that it held back the liberation movement and was used by the colonialists as a pretext for punitive operations against the forces of national liberation. ³ He repeatedly emphasised that the complete elimination of colonialism and neocolonialism was essential not only to the oppressed nations, but also to the whole of mankind, since they generated conflicts and constantly threatened universal peace. ⁴

Nehru considered the Western powers' efforts to involve

¹ *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. Three, p. 94.

² *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. Four, Delhi, 1964, p. 121.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

developing countries in military blocs as a manifestation of neocolonialism. He regarded the setting up of SEATO and the Baghdad Pact in the mid-1950 as a direct threat to India. He realised that the myth about the communist threat was used by the imperialist powers to set the young independent states against one another, to sow the seeds of mistrust among them, to fan out conflicts and to make them squander increasing funds on armament. In his view all this was aimed at weakening the young states, tying them down to the imperialist states, protecting the latter's economic and political positions and helping them to exploit their former colonies. He pointed out that the policy of military blocs ran counter to the positive tendencies in international life towards the relaxation of tensions, building up confidence, ensuring peace. That policy was designed to foster mutual hatred and mistrust among nations, bring about conflicts and build up the arms race.¹

Nehru felt that the policy of imperialism could be countered by the unity of all the developing countries built on non-alignment, that is, non-participation in any military or political blocs.

Today, after more than thirty years of its existence the non-aligned movement is displaying various tendencies. Certain politicians in the developing countries, while proclaiming their allegiance to non-alignment, advocate the concept of equidistance from both blocs, the imperialist powers and the socialist community of countries. This boils down to reducing the idea of non-alignment to neutrality which was opposed by Nehru. This approach contradicts the anti-imperialist spirit of non-alignment and cancels out its original meaning. Visualising the situation of the former colonial periphery of imperialism in the mid-1950s will help clarify the motives behind the setting up of the non-aligned movement, which some people tend to forget or deliberately doom to oblivion. Neither India, nor Indonesia, nor Egypt, nor Ghana, nor Guinea, nor other countries which then embarked on the path of independent development have ever been aligned with the socialist community and the question of their aligning with it has never been raised, and could have never been

¹ *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. Three, p. 320.

raised. In the recent past, these countries were tied up with the world capitalist system as its raw-material base, a source of enrichment and an object of brutal exploitation. Having cast away the yoke of political dependence, they have not yet fully overcome the economic backwardness, largely remaining a cog in the economic system of world capitalism. The strategy of imperialist powers has been aimed at entangling these countries in the web of economic, political and military dependence through creating, among other things, military blocs and turning them into their satellites. Therefore, non-alignment within the concrete context of its origination was, above all, a challenge to imperialism, a demonstration of independence. It meant independence of imperialism and readiness to cooperate with the socialist world, and freedom from the impact of the cold war and anti-communist policies which imperialist countries sought to impose on them. It is no accident that Nehru's foreign policy provoked the hatred of the most belligerent imperialist quarters. John F. Dulles declared the non-alignment concept (which he equated with neutrality) to be outdated, immoral and short-sighted, claiming that Nehru's non-alignment did not mean strict neutrality with respect to either East or West.¹ Dulles was not the only imperialist politician to blame Nehru for gravitating to the East rather than the West.

Nehru understood non-alignment not as the "equidistance" stand, not as neutrality, but as a fundamental solution to each specific question in harmony with the interests of national independence and the struggle against imperialism, neocolonialism and all forms of exploitation.

As Nehru saw it, non-alignment — along with anti-imperialism and securing independence for the newly-free states — was to achieve two other important goals: ensuring economic aid free of the strings of political dictate and strengthening international peace as the necessary prerequisite for the development of young states. Nehru felt that the latter goal could be achieved in two ways — by mediation between the two opposed blocs designed to find mutually acceptable solutions in the

¹ Walter Crocker, *Nehru. A Contemporary Estimate*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1966, pp. 114, 115.

interest of detente and disarmament and by the creation of a peace zone comprising the non-aligned states. The geographical expansion of the peace zone and the growing authority and potential of the countries involved in it were supposed to have a stabilising influence on the international situation.

Nehru was one of the pioneers, ideologists and highly influential and respected leaders of the non-aligned movement. His contribution to the elaboration of its principles and involvement of ever new countries in it cannot be overestimated. Nehru was one of those who advanced the five principles (Pancha Sila) as the basis for the peaceful coexistence of Asian countries. He was among those who suggested convening the historic Bandung Conference of 1955 that proved to be a landmark in mobilising the newly-free Asian and African countries to the struggle against imperialism, neocolonialism and racism, for peace, freedom and socio-economic progress.

The non-aligned movement is still playing an important role in international affairs. It has become broad enough to comprise practically all the developing countries. Nehru was sure that this would happen because non-alignment was brought about by objective needs.

With the scope of the non-aligned movement growing geographically and politically, the movement faces quite a few problems and difficulties. Some of its participants are losing a clear vision of their common goals, harbour illusions about the possibility of equitable partnership with the leading capitalist powers, display mistrust in the socialist world, and allege that the liberation and revolutionary processes are a result of "communist intrigues". Such trends are dangerous as they erode the mainstays of the movement.

* * *

Among Jawaharlal Nehru's historic merits is his unswerving striving for unity and alliance with all the progressive forces in the world arena. As early as 1927 it urged his active participation in the Brussels Congress. In his *An Autobiography* he wrote, "Ideas of some common action between oppressed nations *inter se*, as well as be-

tween them and the Labour left wing, were very much in the air. It was felt more and more that the struggle for freedom was a common one against the thing that was imperialism, and joint deliberation and, where possible, joint action were desirable.”¹ This was an important step towards recognising the unity of the national liberation struggle and the revolutionary, including working-class, movements throughout the world. In the person of Jawaharlal Nehru, revolutionary nationalism responded to Lenin’s call for broad cooperation and concerted action in the struggle against imperialism. In his Presidential Address Nehru said: “Socialism in the West and the rising nationalism of the Eastern and other dependent countries opposed this combination of fascism and imperialism... Where do we stand then, we who labor for a free India? Inevitably we take our stand with the progressive forces of the world which are ranged against fascism and imperialism.”²

This was dramatically and fruitfully manifested in Jawaharlal Nehru’s constant striving to achieve mutual understanding with the Soviet Union. The establishment and successful expansion of Hindu-Soviet cooperation is directly linked to the political course of Jawaharlal Nehru.

* * *

Nehru’s ideas have preserved their importance today. However, no political course can remain progressive unless it is sensitive to the call of the time.

Nehru was extremely sensitive to the imperative of the day. Constant development and change were the highlights of his activity and world outlook. Over the past 25 years much has changed in the life in India. The social activity and political awareness of the working masses are on the rise and the level of the political consciousness of the democratic forces shows greater maturity. In this context, Jawaharlal Nehru’s legacy should be elaborated on so as to be able to serve as a factor of progress.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 161.

² Jawaharlal Nehru, *The First Sixty Years*, Vol. One, The John Day Company, New York, 1965, p. 427.

Although his world outlook was strongly influenced by the years of reformist practice, he never remained capable of giving an impartial and sober assessment of his own policy. He understood the meaning of true socialism and was therefore aware of the relative nature of the concept of a "socialist pattern of society". It is no accident that he repeatedly stressed, in particular at the INC session in Bhubaneswar, the need to elaborate on this concept and make it more precise. He was aware of the masses' dissatisfaction with the outcome of the social policy. He, too, was far from being pleased with it.

Our time makes it imperative to look back to the revolutionary platform which Nehru advocated in the 1920s and 1930s and which he never rejected as outdated or incorrect. This will make it possible to infuse his subjective socialism with actual meaning and turn it from a propaganda slogan into the people's programme of action. Nehru's legacy cannot be used in forging a progressive policy without its critical assessment and development. This criticism is not designed to diminish the importance of Nehru's legacy. On the contrary, it stems from profound respect for him and from a belief in the value of his ideological and political platform, and from the conviction that its positive potential is far from having been exhausted.

* * *

An overview of Jawaharlal Nehru's versatile activity as a politician, public figure, philosopher and historian brings us to the conclusion that the best about his legacy is rooted in his gravitation towards socialism and progress, in his interest in the scientific theory of socialism that in fact considerably influenced his world outlook and policy.

Nehru's attraction to socialism accounts for his support of the idea of stronger unity with the forces of progress, the international working-class movement, and for cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Nehru's attraction to socialism also accounts for a "socialist pattern of society" having been proclaimed the goal of the Indian National Congress.

For all the ambiguity of Nehru's socialist ideal, he was undoubtedly one of the first leaders of the national liberation movement to realise the limitations of anti-imperialist nationalism and the need to transform it along socialist lines. This constitutes the historic achievement of independent India's first prime minister.

INDIRA GANDHI

Indira Gandhi was born on November 19, 1917 in Allahabad, the state of Uttar Pradesh. She got her early schooling in Allahabad and then in Switzerland. Later she attended Rabindranath Tagore's Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan, near Calcutta. Since 1937, she studied history at Somerville College in Oxford, Britain. As a student, she participated in student movements in both countries. While in Britain, she joined the Labour Party.

Jawaharlal Nehru had a tremendous impact on the formation of his daughter Indira's world outlook. In the letters he wrote to her from prison he expounded his scientific, philosophical and political views.

In 1938, Indira Gandhi joined the Indian National Congress.

She was persecuted by the British colonial authorities for her participation in the national liberation movement. In 1942 she was arrested and spent several months in prison.

In 1955, she became member of the Congress Working Committee and in 1958, of the All-India Congress Committee. Between February and December 1959, she was President of the Indian National Congress.

Between 1960 and 1964, she was a member of the UNESCO Executive Board. Working in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund, she contributed to the organisation of education for children in rural areas.

Upon her father's death in 1964, she became a member of Lal Bahadur Shastri's government as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

Elected leader of the INC Parliamentary Party in January 1966, she held the post of India's Prime Minister until March 1977.

In March 1977, the ruling Congress Party suffered a defeat at the Parliamentary elections. Indira Gandhi was

voted down in the Rae Bareli constituency of Uttar Pradesh and retired with her entire government.

Arrested on a charge of corruption and abuse of power during the nationwide state of emergency she introduced in June 1975, she was released when the accusations brought against her proved unfounded.

In December 1977, she declared that the Congress failed to play the role of an active opposition party and relinquished her seat on the Congress Working Committee.

In January 1978, she walked out of the Congress to found and chair a new, opposition Congress (I) Party.

At the by-elections of November 1978 Indira Gandhi was elected deputy of the House of the People in the Chikmagalur constituency of Karnataka.

On December 19, 1978 reactionary forces succeeded in forcing the decision to expel Indira Gandhi from Parliament. She was arrested and cast into the Tihar Jail on a charge of disrespect for Parliament. Released from prison on December 26, 1978, she continued her political activity chairing the new, opposition Congress (I) Party.

In January 1980, the Congress (I) Party won a victory at the Parliamentary elections. Indira Gandhi was elected deputy to the House of the People in the constituencies of Medak, Andhra Pradesh, and Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh, and became leader of the Parliamentary Party of the Congress (I) Party.

On January 14, 1980 Indira Gandhi again came to office as India's Prime Minister. Simultaneously, she took the post of Minister of Defence and remained at it until 1982.

Indira Gandhi's contribution to promoting her country's political and economic independence and economic progress was enormous.

Her service to the cause of peace, international security, checking the arms race and preventing nuclear disaster is universally recognised.

Since 1983 she chaired, in her capacity of the head of the Indian government, the non-aligned movement.

In October 1984 she was assassinated by terrorists.

Indira Gandhi was a great friend of the Soviet Union. She visited the country on several occasions. As the head of the Indian government she promoted friendly relations between the Indian and the Soviet peoples. In 1985 she was posthumously awarded the Lenin International Peace

Prize for promoting peace among nations.

Indira Gandhi held an honorary doctoral degree (*honoris causa*) from universities in many countries, including Moscow and Kiev State Universities, and from the USSR Academy of Sciences.

History knows of many bloody crimes. The assassination of India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi will never go unnoticed among them. The killing of a woman for political reasons is a rare occurrence. It points to passions running high, contradictions becoming ever more acute and struggles turning fierce and cruel.

Indira Gandhi's entire life, especially in its last twenty years, was outstanding. Closely tied up with the history of a great country, it was truly epoch-making. Now that her epoch is nearing its end, it should be assessed in such a way as to allow corrections in the approach to the country's future. This assessment can hardly be final and decisive. Only time can help to clear up some of the facts, exposing, among other things, the internal and, especially, external forces that guided the assassins. It will bring to light the yet unknown circumstances that are essential to making historical judgement. However, the first step towards the evaluation can — and must — be made already at this point. Indira Gandhi's life and legacy are turning into a political and ideological battlefield.

* * *

Indira Gandhi grew up in the atmosphere of national liberation struggle. When she was a child, her father Jawaharlal Nehru was taking his first steps in the political arena as member of the Indian National Congress. In the days of her infancy, her grandfather Motilal Nehru enjoyed authority and influence as a Congress veteran and the leader of its old guard, the liberals. Motilal Nehru stood out among them for his broadmindedness and sensitivity to change. He was the only prominent representative of the Congress's older generation to support, despite the opposition on the part of his former associates, the Gandhian programme of non-cooperation with the British authorities advanced at the extraordinary

session of the INC held in September 1920 in Calcutta. He thereby approved of the radicalisation and democratisation of the INC associated with the name and activity of Mahatma Gandhi. Motilal Nehru was aware of the approach of a new era in the liberation movement and stretched out his hand to the new generation of nationalists among whom his son Jawaharlal was playing a major role. Although father and son would differ strongly on various tactical questions posed by the liberation movement, they were united, apart from personal bonds, by their unconditional commitment to the cause of national liberation. In the 1930s, when millions of Indians would go out into the street to protest against the British rule, the son surpassed his father as a national leader. As the head of the INC left wing, he grew into an outstanding leader of the national struggle, second to Mahatma Gandhi.

The women in the Nehru family took active part in the liberation movement, as well. In April 1932, Swarup Rani Nehru, Indira Gandhi's grandmother, already in her declining years then, participated in an anti-British demonstration and was beaten up by the police. Kamala Nehru, Indira's mother, too, was persecuted for her support of the liberation movement. The Nehru home was the Congress headquarters and a centre of struggle against the British colonialists. The family perceived the struggle with all its ups and downs as their personal affair. This was also true of Indira. Later in her life she recalled, "My public life started at the age of three. I have no recollection of games, children's parties or playing with other children. My favorite occupation as a very small child was to deliver thunderous speeches to the servants, standing on a high table."¹

Indira Gandhi participated in demonstrations and served as a courier for the grown-up protesters already as a teenage girl. Her interests and concerns were not those of a child. However, her involvement in the movement did not prevent her from feeling lonely and abandoned. The adults in the family were repeatedly arrested; at times her father and mother were imprisoned simultaneously and she, the only daughter, was left in care of relatives and servants. Their home was frequently raided by the po-

¹ *International Herald Tribune*, November 1, 1984, p. 2.

lice. During Jawaharlal Nehru's long years in prison, correspondence was the only way for him to communicate with his daughter. The letters to her make up his famous *Glimpses of World History*, a good reading on history for the young.

Indira Gandhi went to school now in India, now in Switzerland where her mother went for medical treatment. After her death in 1937, Indira entered the Somerville College in Oxford to study management, history and anthropology. In 1941, she returned to India and a year later married the Allahabad journalist, INC supporter Feroze Gandhi (a namesake of the leader of the Indian National liberation movement, Mahatma Gandhi), her childhood friend, whom she met again in Britain and who accompanied her on her trip home. In September 1942, Feroze and Indira Gandhi were arrested. The colonial administration was conducting a regular of mass reprisals against the INC. The campaign came as a response to the famous anti-British "Quit India" resolution endorsed by the Congress Working Committee on August 8, 1942. Indira Gandhi remained in prison until May 1943.

Her first son Rajiv was born in 1944. Her second son Sanjai, born in 1946, was killed in an air crash in 1980. Feroze Gandhi died in 1960.

In 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru became India's first prime minister. Indira Gandhi was undoubtedly aware of all his undertakings and well versed in domestic and international politics. Together, they participated in the Bandung Conference of 1955 that signalled the beginning of the non-aligned movement. The same year Indira Gandhi was elected to the Congress Working Committee, which was, in a way, the party's headquarters. For a brief period in 1959 she chaired the INC.

Upon Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964, the new Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri suggested Indira Gandhi's joining the Cabinet. She chose one of the less important posts, that of the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Her appointment was evidently a tribute of respect to her father, rather than a result of her personal political influence. The offer also came as an aid to the late Premier's daughter who was left without any substantial means. A favourable political effect of the gesture was certainly taken into account, too. In the public eye, the presence of Indira Gandhi in the government

was symbolic of allegiance to the behests of the national leader.

When Lal Bahadur Shastri died in 1966, the ruling party entrusted his office to Indira Gandhi. It did not mean that she had already become the most influential figure in the INC. It is more probable that her appointment was due to the rivalry among the more influential and experienced leaders unable to come to an agreement.

Among those aspiring for premiership was Morarji Desai, a prominent representative of the INC's right wing, one of its big bosses. As the Chief Minister of Bombay, whose influence exceeded the limits of that state, he relied on a solid local base. In 1957, Jawaharlal Nehru brought him to the central government first as the Minister of Commerce and then as the Minister of Finance. In 1963, Desai, together with five other ministers of the central government, resigned under the Kamaraj Plan approved by Nehru and designed to inject the INC leadership with fresh blood. Some of the recognised leaders were released to work on mobilising the masses.

Desai was strong in character, ambitious, egocentric and comparatively narrow-minded. He was a Hindu conservative and a militant supporter of the traditional set-up. This by no means prevented him from enjoying the confidence of Indian capitalists. He regarded himself as a true follower of Mahatma Gandhi. However, what he focused on in Gandhism was its ritual aspect and moral precepts for the individual, rather than its social, humanistic and democratic aspects. What attracted him about Gandhism was its patriarchal character and idealisation of the Indian past.

Desai did not share Jawaharlal Nehru's fascination with socialism. Neither did he support his insistence on strengthening public sector and waging an independent, consistently anti-imperialist foreign policy. He turned into one of the leading representatives of a potential right-wing opposition to the Nehru course. The public associated him with the wealthy Indian industrialists tied up with the monopolies and gravitating towards pro-Western orientation in foreign policy. During Nehru's lifetime, these tendencies did not pose any real danger to his course. They did not fully manifest themselves until 15 years later when Morarji Desai became, for a brief period, the Prime Minister of India.

Desai posed no threat to Nehru. Without sharing Desai's social and ethical conservatism, Nehru was appreciative of his purposefulness and efficiency. However, Desai's aspirations for the role of the national leader provoked counteraction of some other prominent figures in the Congress. His right-wing views, though, soon proved not to be alien to them.

The party turning bureaucratic and bourgeois, the appearance of an influential group of big bosses who sought to resolve all problems among themselves and in their own interest led to a fight for power in the INC top echelons. This fight did not come into the open in Nehru's lifetime. Sensitive to the dangerous tendencies that threatened to undermine the nation's belief in the organisation which used to lead the anti-imperialist struggle, India's first prime minister tried to fight them back. His efforts proved to be futile.

Several years after Nehru's death the group known as the Syndicate that emerged within the INC leadership in 1963 won a reputation for its heading the right-wing opposition to the policy of India's third Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The group consisted of the prominent figures in the Congress and chief ministers of states Kamaraj Nadar, Sanjiva Reddy, S. Nijalingappa, S. K. Patil and Atulya Ghosh. The Syndicate members relied on the support of the INC organisations in their own states. However, none of them ever had any chance to take the post of prime minister. Realising that, they solemnly rejected the opportunity and decided to exert collective influence on the Congress leadership and policy.

Morarji Desai hoped to become head of state when Jawaharlal Nehru died. However, the Syndicate refused to support him and suggested choosing a candidate enjoying the confidence of all the members of the Congress Working Committee. Desai had no choice but to accept this decision. Lal Bahadur Shastri was elected by the consensus of the leading Congress members. Upon his death the situation repeated itself. Desai's adversaries opted for Indira Gandhi. This time Desai refused to take his name off the ballot. There were two names on the ballot for the position of leader of the INC Parliamentary Party, who was also to become the country's prime minister. Indira Gandhi won a landslide victory receiving 355 votes against 169 cast for her rival.

Morarji Desai claimed that the Syndicate had nominated Indira Gandhi to prevent him from coming to power.¹ This is not completely untrue. It stands to reason, however, that the INC leaders and members of its Parliamentary Party had other considerations too. As before, they capitalised on Indira Gandhi symbolising a continuation of the policies of Nehru. Some people in the upper echelons of the INC wanted the new premier to be just a figure-head, a representative of power who would not prevent the Congress leaders from forging the country's political course. Indira Gandhi took a different stand. She was not in the least interested in the false display of respect. She wanted to be the true head of state, the leader of the nation, and not a figure-head. Her goal was clear-cut and so were her ideas. As she recalled later, "I was worried at the thought of Mr. Morarji Desai becoming Prime Minister because his policies were so diametrically opposed to what we stood for, and I feared that India would immediately change direction."²

Nehru's political course aimed at consolidating the position of the public sector in the economy, expanding the planning system, subordinating private enterprise to national goals, completing agrarian reforms, eliminating poverty and starvation, raising the living standard and cultural level of the masses, ensuring the country's economic independence, rebuffing imperialist encroachments, supporting liberation movements, promoting peace and cooperation with socialist countries, became, after his death, less and less clear-cut and purposeful. It met with increasingly vigorous resistance on the part of the right-wingers not only among the opposition but within the Congress itself. The course towards the liberalisation with respect to vested interests grew ever more pronounced. Even the text of the resolution adopted by the INC session in Durgapur in 1965 (as well as the one endorsed by the Jaipur Session of 1966) testified to a retreat as compared to the Bhubaneswar Session's resolution which was drawn up under Nehru and spoke of a revolution in the economic and social relations in Indian society.

Indira Gandhi intended to stop the retreat from the posi-

¹ See Dom Moraes, *Mrs. Gandhi*, Jonathan Cape Ltd., London, 1980, p. 127.

² Indira Gandhi, *My Truth*, Vision Books, New Delhi, 1981, p. 108.

tions gained before and to ensure a continuation and development of the Nehru course. In her first statement as prime minister, she spoke of a "disconcerting gap between intention and action"¹ on the part of Congress leaders and officials.

Indira Gandhi first gained the office and then the power. It was not an easy task. The struggle to ensure the traditionally leading status of the prime minister in state life and politics revealed the strength of Indira Gandhi's convictions, courage and will-power.

"I had an advantage," she once observed, "because of the education my father gave me and the opportunities of meeting some great people, not only politicians, but also writers, artists and so on. But in politics one has to work doubly hard to show one is not merely a daughter, but also a person in her own right... Of course, being a woman, you have to work twice as hard as a man."² As for her work schedule, Indira Gandhi followed her father's example. As head of state she worked eighteen hours a day. Characteristic of her were not only her rare endurance and readiness to spare no effort, but also the independence of opinion, an inclination towards conducting her own policy, persistency and determination in reaching for the goals she set.

The 1967 elections, held in the early days of Indira Gandhi's premiership, served as a warning for the ruling party. The INC had great difficulty in gaining victory nationwide. The parliamentary opposition had never been so strong. The Congress lost power in five states and only gained an insufficient and unstable majority in three other states. This pointed to a decline in the INC's popularity and prestige. In fact, what the constituencies assessed was not the activity of the Indira Gandhi government, which had only recently formed, but the policy of the Congress following the death of its recognised leader Jawaharlal Nehru.

These were the first elections held after Nehru's death. Their results, disconcerting for the INC, were determined not only by the nation having lost its leader and the wor-

¹ *The Years of Challenge. Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi. January 1966-August 1969*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1973, p. 6.

² *International Herald Tribune*, November 1, 1984, p. 2.

sening of the situation in the country due to the severe drought of 1965-1967, but also by the INC leaders having lost their bearings upon Nehru's death. The "socialist pattern of society" proclaimed as the INC goal was a rather vague concept even in Nehru's lifetime. Under his successors it ceased to be a working slogan altogether. Most electors were disappointed with the INC inability to raise the standard of living. The political capital gained by the Congress as the organisation that headed the nation's resistance to British colonialism turned out to have been almost entrusted over the Congress's twenty years in power, and especially during the years since Nehru's death.

Indira Gandhi had to assess the situation. She responded to the warning of the constituencies with a Ten Point Programme that resurrected the idea of a "socialist pattern of society" and formulated the goal of creating a stable national economy. The programme aimed at nationalising the insurance system, establishing "public control" over the banks, state monopoly of exports and imports, state and cooperative trade in grain and other consumer goods designed to put an end to speculation in the private sector, restricting the growth of monopolies, setting limits to land ownership and income accruing from property, carrying out a land reform, rendering aid to landless peasants, introducing guaranteed minimum wages for rural workers, abolishing the feudal privileges of the princes that survived from the times of the British rule when the princes were regarded as sovereign rulers although they were mere puppets in the hands of the colonial administration.

At Indira Gandhi's request, this programme was endorsed by the Congress Working Committee in May 1967. During the discussion of the programme at the session of the All-India Congress Committee, it was amended in such a way as to make it more democratic. The abolition of the privileges for the princes was also spread to their huge pensions established after the proclamation of India's independence. The "public control" of the banks was replaced by their nationalisation. Shortly afterwards, however, the programme started to be debated again. The Cabinet ministers did not agree to some of its provisions. In October 1967, they returned to the original formulation of "public control" instead of nationalisation of banks.

A split in the INC was imminent. The reason behind it was the disagreement of some prominent party leaders, known as the old guard, with the Prime Minister's policies. Indira Gandhi's independence and drive for serious social change brought about not only discontent but also counteraction on the part of the Syndicate. Its five members wielded an important lever of political power — the party machinery. They were determined to apply it at the slightest threat to their position. They only needed an obedient prime minister. Lal Bahadur Shastri had already caused their displeasure by shunning their guidance. Under Indira Gandhi contradictions became more acute and principled. This was more than just struggle for power.

At the height of the dispute, in her December 1969 interview with *Pravda* correspondents Indira Gandhi said that the struggle stemmed from the differences in the party on the whole range of economic, social and political problems. This was a struggle, she said, between those who believed in Nehru's policies and those who, while recognising it in words, had done and continued to do everything possible to prevent its implementation. Contradictions and clashes between the supporters and the opponents of the Nehru course originated already in his lifetime. In those days, however, Nehru's opponents tried to keep in the shadow, sabotaging the party policy on the sly. In the last years of Nehru's life, Indira Gandhi said, direct opposition also took place. Among those who openly attacked certain aspects in the policy of her father, she added, was Morarji Desai. Therefore, she commented, what was happening now was nothing new, but a continuation of the old struggle and the old differences.

Formerly, the Syndicate and Desai had been sworn enemies. In the new context they united in their opposition to Indira Gandhi's progressive steps. In her broadcast statement of December 27, 1970, when the clash with the Syndicate had passed the zenith, Indira Gandhi thus assessed the split in the INC, "These attempts to accelerate the pace of social and economic reforms have naturally roused the opposition of vested interests."¹ The Syndicate

¹ *The Years of Endeavour. Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi. August 1969-August 1972*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1975, p. 76.

was turning into right-wing opposition and used its influence among the INC members to bring pressure to bear on the Prime Minister.

According to the tradition that took shape over the years of India's independence, it was Prime Minister who headed the Congress. In 1951, Jawaharlal Nehru, president of the INC, stemmed in the bud Tandon's attempts to saddle him with his policies. Until 1954, the post had been held by Nehru. Then he appointed his successor. The problem of national leader was finally resolved. Faced with the Syndicate's attempts to put pressure to bear on her, Indira Gandhi strove to become president of the INC. She was never allowed to do so. After Kamaraj Nadar, the INC was headed by Nijalingappa.

The fight for the influence over the Congress was rampant. Later, Indira Gandhi recalled, "It was not obvious to all, but it was obvious to us, to everybody here, because every time we had a meeting of the Executive of Parliamentary Party, there would be tension and some people would deliberately try to — I won't say insult, although it was pretty near — but needle me on any small point and make it as unpleasant as possible." ¹

Indira Gandhi appealed to the masses and rallied support for the Ten Point Programme. The February 1969 elections in five states testified to a further decline in the INC authority and led to the defeat of some of the Syndicate's supporters and a victory for the Prime Minister's followers. Upon the death of Zakir Hussain, the two factions of the INC clashed at the presidential elections. V. V. Giri, supported by the Prime Minister, won by a narrow majority.

In her struggle against the Syndicate, Indira Gandhi relied on the rank-and-file participants in the movement. On November 8, 1969 she released a Letter to Congressmen to explain the situation in the party. "What we witness today," she wrote, "is not a mere clash of personalities, and certainly not a fight for power. It is not as simple as a conflict between the parliamentary and organisational wings. It is a conflict between two outlooks and attitudes in regard to the objectives of the Congress and the methods in which Congress itself should function... The Congress

¹ Indira Gandhi, *My Truth*, p. 130.

was moulded by Mahatma Gandhi and my father to be the prime instrument of social change...

In his last years my father was greatly concerned that there were people inside the Congress who were offering resistance to change. My own experience even before the fourth general election was that the forces of status quo, with close links with powerful economic interests, were ranged against me.”¹

On November 12, taking advantage of his INC Presidential mandate, Nijalingappa expelled Indira Gandhi from the INC. This only brought to light the INC split into two factions. In December 1969, they both held parallel sessions of the All-India Congress Committee. However, the Syndicate had overestimated its strength while underrating the support of the masses to the Prime Minister. Having found themselves in a dramatic minority, the Syndicate supporters started to go over to the faction which emerged victorious from the conflict. Thus, the Syndicate turned out to have been actually expelled from the INC. The organisation created by Indira Gandhi's adversaries could not compete with the ruling party and never turned into a national political force. Indira Gandhi's success in the fight against the INC “bosses” tremendously boosted her popularity and prestige. She emerged from the fight as the incontestable and influential leader of the nation.

The decision on the nationalisation of 14 major private commercial banks was adopted in July 1969, at the peak of the struggle between the INC factions. It signalled a step forward as compared to the previously approved “public control”. Substantiating the decision, Indira Gandhi emphasised its link to the concept of the “socialist pattern of society”. She reminded the members of her government that “the socialist pattern of society did impose on us the obligation to bring the strategic areas of our economy under State ownership and control”.²

The nationalisation of commercial banks implied a continuation of the INC former policy of nationalising the ramified life insurance system and the state bank and of setting up institutions to finance agricultural and industrial development. According to Indira Gandhi, the

¹ Nayantara Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi: Her Road to Power*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1982, pp. 50-51.

² *The Years of Challenge*, p. 129.

banking system, which plays an exceptional role in the country's economic life, "has necessarily to be inspired by a larger social purpose and has to subserve national priorities and objectives".¹ In her opinion, nationalisation was to "reduce inequalities between different groups and regions". She stressed that "the control of the banking system by the bigger business groups was an important contributory factor in the growth of monopolies in the private sector".² Nationalisation was also aimed at mobilising the available resources and using them to promote production in the interests of society rather than private capitalist profit, providing loans for agriculture, small industries and export-oriented enterprises, encouraging new groups of entrepreneurs and improving bank management.

The nationalisation of banks provided an additional impetus to the planning system and the public sector and enhanced the influence of the state on all areas of social and economic life. Indira Gandhi regarded it as a "small, very definite step in a particular direction" which showed that at last things were moving and the country had "got out of the rut".³

The masses were enthusiastic about the nationalisation of the banks and the abolition of privileges for the princes. The reactionaries made every effort to sabotage these measures or to outlaw them by taking advantage of the Supreme Court's right to constitutional review. It was not for the first time that the judicial bodies protected the interests of the privileged classes. Jawaharlal Nehru faced a similar situation in 1951 and 1955 when, seeking to oppose the agrarian reform, the courts tried to monopolise interpretation of the Constitution and prevented the implementation of constitutional provisions on social goals by manipulating with the articles on citizens' rights, above all, the right to property. By urging amendments to the Constitution, Nehru defended Parliament's status as the supreme body of power and thus frustrated the reactionaries' designs.

Indira Gandhi, too, hoped to have the Constitution amended in such a way as to prevent the transformation

¹ *The Years of Challenge*, p. 127.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 130.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 135.

of judicial bodies into a weapon in the reactionaries' socio-political struggle and to set the stage for the envisaged reforms. For all the difference in the power of the two factions, the split in the INC complicated the government's position in Parliament. Indira Gandhi commented, "The amendments to the Constitution designed to pave the way to abolish privy purses and princely privileges were lost by a fraction of a vote in the Rajya Sabha. The Presidential Order derecognising the princes has been struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional." ¹ The situation called for an appeal to the electors who were to resolve the dispute and assess the regrouping of the political forces that had occurred without their participation. Indira Gandhi decided to conduct Parliamentary by-elections. In her message to the nation on December 27, 1970, she said, "Time will not wait for us. The millions who demand food, shelter and jobs are pressing for actions... That is why we have decided to go to our people and to seek a fresh mandate from them." ²

In the late 1960s, the Indian government largely focused on agriculture. The agrarian reform had not been radical enough and failed to solve the problems of landless peasants and those owing small plots of land. Big land ownership had not been done away with and social contradictions in rural India continued to grow. However, measures were taken to encourage capitalist enterprise in rural areas. The so-called green revolution was going on. It involved financing and introducing progressive methods of soil cultivation, improving the seed funds etc. In one of her interviews Indira Gandhi gave a realistic assessment to the social outcome of these measures. She indicated that the results of the new policy could only benefit the areas which had enough irrigated land and the more or less well-to-do peasants. There appeared a whole stratum of wealthy peasants in the Indian countryside and that certainly generated additional problems that tended to grow ever more complicated. At the same time, the "green revolution" made it possible to revive agriculture, increase its productivity and achieve a breakthrough in providing the country with its own farm produce and thus liberate it from the burden of grain supplies from the United States.

¹ *The Years of Endeavour*, p. 76.

² *Ibid.*

The Parliamentary elections were scheduled for March 1971. Indira Gandhi was in the heat of her successful struggle against the Syndicate. She conducted the election campaign under the "Eradicate Poverty" slogan and promised to allocate considerable funds for aiding the peasants and giving loans to the poor. The Congress won a convincing victory that signalled return to the times of Jawaharlal Nehru.

* * *

Before long, however, the situation changed for the worse. Among the reasons for that were developments in Hindustan. Discontent with the discriminatory policy of the central government in Islamabad spread throughout East Pakistan. The Awami League, a party that enjoyed the support of the masses, insisted on restructuring the state along federal principles. At the elections which, after a long period of procrastination, were finally held in December 1970, the League, headed by Mujibur Rahman, won a landslide victory. The authorities retaliated with mass reprisals launched on March 25. The next day, Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the creation of the Republic of Bangladesh. The guerrilla troops put up strong resistance to the Pakistani army which attempted to massacre the former East Bengal's movement for self-determination. Millions of refugees fled to India. Driving the patriotic troops away, the Pakistani army repeatedly violated Indian borders. Islamabad's effort to keep the Eastern province to itself with the help of punitive operations that caused the indignation of the democratic public worldwide, was supported by the ruling circles in the United States. The latter encouraged Pakistan's policy of genocide in East Bengal and actions threatening India's security.

In this context, on August 9, 1971, a Soviet-Hindu Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed in Delhi. It was a logical outcome of friendly, good-neighborly relations between the two countries. These relations had been developing for more than fifteen years in accordance with the traditions of friendship with the world's first socialist state that emerged under Prime Minister Nehru. The Treaty elevated Hindu-Soviet relations to a higher level, broadening their scope, making them more stable and effective and thus making it possible

to plan cooperation between the two countries on a long-term basis. It marked a victory for the policy of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and pointed to the scope of cooperation made possible by mutual trust and respect.

In the Preamble to the Treaty, the parties reaffirmed their intention to broaden and strengthen friendly relations and stressed that it corresponded to the basic national interests of both countries and to the cause of lasting peace in Asia and throughout the world. Article I of the Treaty proclaimed mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit as the fundamental principles governing Hindu-Soviet relations. The Treaty envisaged regular contacts between the contracting parties to discuss important international issues of mutual concern (Article V) and the expansion of economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation (Articles VI and VII). Article IX states: "In the event that any of the Parties is attacked or threatened with attack the High Contracting Parties will immediately start mutual consultations with a view to eliminating this threat and taking appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security for their countries."¹ The Treaty was to be in effect for 20 years, after which it could be prolonged. The USSR Supreme Soviet and the President of India ratified the Treaty the month it was signed. Against the background of anxiety caused by the situation along the Indian borders, the Treaty was perceived as the Soviet Union's support to the policies conducted by the Indira Gandhi government and by the young state of Bangladesh.

Early in December 1971, the Pakistani air force bombed Indian military airfields. In response, on December 4, India declared war on Pakistan and then granted recognition to the Republic of Bangladesh. Military operations were successful for India and, thanks to the support from the Bangladesh population, soon led to the complete defeat of Pakistan.

The measures taken by the Indian government were popular with the people. India rendered its help to the movement for self-determination. Pakistan which, since the

¹ *New Times*, 1971, No. 33, p. 5.

early days of its existence, conducted a policy hostile to India, was weakened. A new state emerged in Hindustan. The Indian government's diplomatic and military victory was obvious and far-reaching.

The elections conducted in the states early in 1972 proved that the Congress was strengthening its positions. However, shortly afterwards, the by-products of the victory started to make themselves felt. Apart from huge military expenses, India provided a home for 10 million refugees from what was formerly known as East Pakistan. The refugees were provided with lodgings, food and clothing. The support of the refugees cost the country \$3,000,000 daily. The economy of the young state, destroyed by the brief, but bitter war, required aid, too. This created an additional burden for India's budget, especially in the context of the severe drought of 1971-1972 that hit the entire country. It was necessary to increase the imports of grain, the world market prices of which rose by .50 per cent between 1971 and 1973. The consequences of the oil crisis also made themselves felt. Relying on the mechanism of the world capitalist economy, the imperialist powers shifted the burden of the crisis to developing countries. India suffered from a shortage of food and other goods. Prices were soaring and profiteering thrived. The programme of combating poverty could not be implemented. Funds allocated for it were spent on other needs. The hope of using part of the state revenue in the interests of the masses was not justified and the government did not find it possible to redistribute, at least partially, the wealth accumulated in the country. Unemployment and starvation exacerbated social contradictions.

In this context, the opposition that had been defeated at the elections revived and attacked the leader of the ruling party, charging her, among other things, with corruption and violating the election law. This was done with reliance on judicial bodies.

As early as 1971, shortly after the Parliamentary elections, the "socialist" Raj Narain, Indira Gandhi's main rival in the Rae Bareilly constituency, accused her of violating the election rights and appealed to the court to declare the election results invalid. In those days this action was either overlooked or treated as an extravagant step. Events around the emergence of Bangladesh made the public forget this episode. However, when social discontent became

more acute, the opposition raised a ballyhoo around it, banking on the difficulties faced by the country. The scandal played into their hands. The judicial bodies, which had repeatedly tried to counter the progressive measures of the INC, were deeply involved in that political game. In 1975, an Allahabad High Court judge accused Indira Gandhi of corruption in the elections and declared her election to Parliament invalid. He ruled that for the next six years she could not run for premiership and questioned the legality of her taking the premier's office. The opposition played on this decision and, despite Indira Gandhi's proclaimed intention to file an appeal with the Supreme Court, launched a broad campaign to demand her resignation.

The country's social and economic difficulties were aggravated by the political chaos. The right-wing opposition, unable to devise a convincing and principled programme of fighting the INC, was also ravaged by internal wrangling. What kept it together was hatred for the Prime Minister. The country was swept by demonstrations, strikes and rallies, organised by obstructionist politicians opposed to the government measures. Rumours were spread about Indira Gandhi's impending resignation. Law and order in the country was shaken. Speculation, theft and violence ran rampant. The situation was critical. The government's ability to function properly was questioned.

Under these circumstances, on June 26, 1975, the state of emergency was introduced. Simultaneously a Twenty Point Programme was proclaimed benefitting the poorer sections of the population. It was based on the 10 points that had been set forth in 1967, but were never fully implemented. The INC promised to complete the agrarian reform, promote rural development, help the poorer peasants, cancel all debts and indentured labour, guarantee fixed prices of food and basic necessities, ensure a stable supply of food and basic consumer goods, raise the minimum wage in rural areas, broaden the scope of irrigation work, encourage handicrafts, etc. It was a good programme of top-priority social and economic reforms. However, just as before, the INC failed even to set about its implementation. The declarative nature of social programmes had become traditional.

True, the state of emergency brought about certain positive results to the Indian population. Anarchy was done

away with, severe measures were taken to combat speculation and strict control was established over prices. This lowered the cost of living and the outburst of discontent and violence was followed by a period of relative security.

However, this did not make the state of emergency a more popular measure. The suspension of political freedoms, the arrest of the opposition leaders and the introduction of strict censorship were regarded as encroachments on the constitution and the traditions of political life. Together with timidity and procrastination in carrying out the social programme this undermined the masses' faith in the INC. The state of emergency could restore political stability for a time. But it failed to win the citizens' support to the INC.

On January 18, 1977 the government announced that elections to the House of the People would be held in March. Simultaneously, the laws on the state of emergency were made less strict, political prisoners were released and the freedom of the press and the freedom of political agitation were restored. Various explanations of the motives behind this decision were suggested — the growing discontent of the capitalists and the bourgeois intelligentsia; apprehensions about the worsening of the economic situation which could bring to naught the effect of the lowering of prices in 1975 and 1976, which had been achieved through extraordinary measures; the hope for a victory due to the opposition's failure to mobilise the masses within the brief period the government set for the election campaign, etc. Frustration caused by the state of emergency, the growing isolation of the government, yearning for the former, more habitual forms of political life must have also been making themselves felt.

Indira Gandhi recollected, "The reason for emergency and postponement of elections was instability and indiscipline in the country. We got over that position. So I thought it was time to have the elections.

"I was by no means sure that I would win. I was sure that we would not get a big majority. I thought that we would just get through perhaps. I did not really give a thought to our winning or not. I just thought that we did not have the elections for some reason and now that the reason was no longer there, we should have the elections. It was that. It was a purely democratic action." ¹

¹ Indira Gandhi, *My Truth*, p. 166.

Hardly Indira Gandhi deliberately was heading for a defeat. Most probably she misjudged the balance of forces. The opposition had not been crushed by reprisals. Paradoxically enough, persecution had made the Prime Minister's opponents stronger. Prison did what leaders of chronically marginal parties and movements failed to do. This loose conglomeration became aware of the community of their immediate interests and goals. The Congress Organisation, Jana Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Socialist Party, the supporters of Jai Prakash Narain, one of the founders of the Socialist Party who organised mass protests against the government and acts of sabotage and obstruction on a non-party basis, as well as groups of former Congressmen who were in favour of dialogue with him, and many others, rallied around such slogans as "Down with Dictatorship!" and "Down with the Queen!" and defeated the INC at the 1977 elections. For the first time in the thirty years of independence the Congress lost power. Within a brief period of time the anti-Congress coalition of parties set up in late January 1977 (the Congress Organisation, Jana Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Socialist Party) and the Congress for Democracy that had broken off from the INC and joined the coalition in February 1977 united into a new party, Janata, which won the majority in Parliament and was entitled to form the government. The Janata Party was headed by Indira Gandhi's old opponent Morarji Desai, formerly member of the Congress Organisation.

This major change in India's political history cannot be explained solely by the country's difficulties in the 1970s alone. The more serious reasons for it are traceable to the INC social and economic policies since the early years of independence. Despite the socialist slogans, India was developing along capitalist lines. The growing contradictions inherent in capitalist development worsened the condition of the working masses. The INC's reputation of the leader of the liberation struggle and the authority of the nation's great leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru could no longer be played upon to suppress the people's discontent with the ever more dramatic contrast between the rich and the poor. There was no radical change in the life of the people. Mahatma's dream — Sarvodaya, the welfare of all — never came true. The nation was in turmoil. All that time, previous to

the state of emergency, Indira Gandhi was aware of how serious the situation was. "We are acutely conscious of the rising impatience of our people," she said in 1973. "We realise that if our system fails to meet their reasonable aspirations, they may opt for other methods."¹

It was not until an emergency situation arose, however, that the government announced its Twenty Point Programme. But as usual, Congress was not firm enough in carrying it out. It could certainly have tackled the more urgent social problems earlier and more consistently. Then, the fight against the Right would have been on the socio-economic plane rather than by purely repressive means, and it would probably have been possible to deny the conservatives any chance of exploiting the nation's disaffection caused by the ruling party's slowness in carrying forward progressive changes. In a way, Indira Gandhi's party had lost control over the train of events. Political observers noted that even the state of emergency — assuming that it was unavoidable — would have been more effective and would not have triggered so negative a reaction among voters if it had been declared a little earlier and not at the height of the unrest.

After her defeat in the 1977 elections, Indira Gandhi's fate took many dramatic turns. The new leadership did its utmost to put an end to her political career. She was arrested twice, charges of corruption were brought against her and members of her family, and she was expelled from Parliament (to which she had been elected again in 1978). And many prominent Congress leaders turned their backs on her, because they believed that the party would fail to make progress, unless it had another leader. All these trials failed to break the will of the staunch fighter. Early in 1978, Indira Gandhi announced the foundation of the Congress (I) Party and again, just as was the case in 1969 when she was fighting the Syndicate, she succeeded in rallying around herself — although this time she had no power at all — a considerable number of members of the collapsing organisation. She argued that the new party was the

¹ *Selected Speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi. September 1972-March 1977*, Vol. III, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1984, p. 660.

true supporter of the Congress traditions. As the leader of the new party she gained victory at the elections in one of the rural districts of South India and became a member of Parliament again.

There were two factors that contributed to Indira Gandhi's return to power — her determination, tirelessness, commitment and ability to reach the masses, on the one hand, and the inability of the Janata government to present the nation with an effective and dynamic programme of action, on the other. The only tendency that clearly manifested itself during the 33 months of the INC taking up the opposition bench first in the policy of the Janata government (headed by Morarji Desai) and then of the Lok Dal party that had split off from the Janata (under the Prime Minister Charan Singh) boiled down to abandoning Nehru's course. This was done under the motto of returning, allegedly, to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. However, the pseudo-Gandhian demagoguery could hardly conceal the kulak philosophy of Charan Singh and the social conservatism of Morarji Desai.¹

The public sector was the first victim to the policies conducted by the coalition government. The rechanneling of funds from industry to agriculture led to serious shortages of manufactured goods. This had a negative effect on the agrarian sector. The encouragement of the private owner in all areas, especially in trade, brought about shortages, speculation and a rapid rise in prices. The foreign policy displayed a retreat from India's traditional anti-imperialist orientation and a revival of pro-American and anti-Soviet tendencies. Non-alignment, which Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi understood as an active and principled policy aimed at frustrating neocolonialist designs of imperialist powers and at strengthening the forces upholding peace, national independence and social progress throughout the world, was replaced by the concept of equidistance from the two blocs, from the USSR and the United States.

Unprecedented corruption, fostered by the strife among the members of the coalition, thrived among government and party officials. Law and order, established in the

¹ See Vishnu Dutt, *Indira Gandhi. Promises to Keep*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, p. 130.

country during the state of emergency, were undermined again. The Janata Party had nothing to boast about. The negative effect of its rule grew ever more pronounced. In a bid to mask its political bankruptcy, the Janata Party took vengeance on the former leaders and loudly criticised the "abuses" committed by them. However, this was as ineffective as "flogging a dead horse", as Indira Gandhi once put it. The bloc of parties and movements that were united only through their struggle against the INC soon disintegrated and lost the electorate's confidence. At the 1980 by-elections, necessitated by a Cabinet crisis, the Congress (I) Party won an impressive victory, securing for itself two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. Indira Gandhi regained premiership.

The last years of Indira Gandhi's life were marked by her increased activity in the international arena. In the context of international tensions aggravated by the imperialists' attempts to regain their positions by force, India, led by Indira Gandhi, pursued a consistently anti-imperialist policy. The holding of the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit in Delhi in March 1983 came as a recognition of India's contribution to peace and the national independence and unity of developing countries. During the three years after the conference India chaired the non-aligned movement.

In the area of domestic politics this period was marked by the exacerbation of inter-community strife and tendencies towards regionalism and separatism that were often provoked or supported from without by those who were not in the least interested in seeing India be united, strong, peaceful and democratic. The work to ensure the unity of India and her people was placed high on the national agenda. Indira Gandhi died in the struggle for unity. She was killed in a retaliation for the resolute action against extremism and terrorism she was obligated to take as the head of government.

* * *

Throughout her tempestuous life Indira Gandhi made quite a few enemies. Many accusations were brought against her. They subsided in the days of national mourning for her only to flare up with renewed force shortly afterwards. These accusations are yet to be sorted out.

Indira Gandhi was accused of departing from Nehru's principles both in the aims of her policy and the means whereby it was carried out. Even as India was mourning her Prime Minister, the *International Herald Tribune* published an article by S. S. Harrison who claimed that Indira Gandhi had pursued her personal goals, conducted a policy endangering India's stability and unity, and scrapped Nehru's approach to religions and regional minorities.¹ Nayantara Sahgal, an authoress who, despite being Indira Gandhi's cousin, had negative feelings about her, maintained that authoritarianism was an inevitable outcome of Indira Gandhi's personality and temperament and that she had broken with the democratic traditions of her father, her family and of the Indian politics. Indira Gandhi was reproached for inability, in contrast to her father, to balance the opposed tendencies in forming her Cabinet and avoid the traditional division into Right and Left. These criticisms came from the opponents of Indira Gandhi's policy. In order to understand her real attitude to her father's heritage, it is necessary to distinguish, in defiance of the Gandhian ethical principle of the unity of aim and means, between the problem of aims and the problem of means regarded from a logical viewpoint, rather than moral. I shall come back to the question of aims later. Let me dwell on the means now.

The changes that took place, under Indira Gandhi, in the political traditions that had been accepted in Nehru's times and during the brief period of Lal Bahadur Shastri's premiership were due not so much to her personality as to the new political context. Two factors contributed to it: the exacerbation of contradictions in Indian society and, consequently, politics, and the different position of the Premier. Nehru first became the leader of the nation and then the Premier. This determined his status in Parliament and the government. His authority was unquestionable. The Congress's unity of the times of the struggle for independence had largely been preserved, showing only the first signs of erosion. In 1947, the Socialist Party, which regarded itself — sometimes without sufficient grounds — as the left-wing opposition, broke away from the Congress; in 1959, the prominent Congressman Rajagopalachari walked out of the Congress to

¹ See *International Herald Tribune*, November 3-4, 1984, p. 4.

found, together with other political leaders, a conservative party that became known as the Swatantra Party. Nehru was ironical about this harmless opposition and was convinced of the popular support to his party. His attitude to the party, government and Parliament was slightly paternalistic. Recognised as a national leader, he could afford this. He did not have to resort to strong measures to pursue his line.

At the beginning, Indira Gandhi did not enjoy comparable authority. The Syndicate, an influential group in the Congress, supported her in the hope to strengthen its own power. In a way, Nehru remained above political passions and struggles. Indira Gandhi was overwhelmed by them. She was in no position to carry on Nehru's course in the government and the Congress using his methods. Tolerance and tact did not prevent Nehru from being the master of the situation. For his daughter, they would have meant the loss of identity because the "old guard" in the Congress persistently worked to discredit her, to remove her from the position of power. No opposition would have dared to do so under Nehru. In this context, showing tolerance would be tantamount to being a passive observer of Nehru's Congress degenerating into Syndicate's Congress, rather than to being a continuer of his tradition. A change in Nehru's style was essential to the preservation of political continuity in the solution of tasks he set.

Indira Gandhi's opponents repeatedly accused her of promoting the interest of the "dynasty", especially when Rajiv Gandhi succeeded her as Prime Minister. True, the head of the current Indian government represents the fourth generation of the Nehru family to play a leading role in the country's political life, and the third generation of the family to be entrusted with supreme executive power. This is a rare occurrence in recent history. It does not require great fantasy or erudition on the part of the Jawaharlal Nehru-Indira Gandhi opponents to start talking about the "ruling dynasty".

However, what makes a dynasty is the principle and form of transfer of power, rather than blood relationship. In the Nehru family the authority of a political leader was not inherited. Motilal Nehru, the first political leader in the family, was a self-made man. His son Jawaharlal had the advantage of having been brought up in a home

that was the headquarters of a national movement. However, he did not inherit his authority, either, but gained it over the years of selfless struggle. Neither was he Motilal Nehru's political heir. Despite their strong attachment to each other, there were serious differences between them. In the late 1920s, Motilal represented Congress moderates and Jawaharlal — Congress radicals. Jawaharlal Nehru opened up new vistas for himself and the INC. He was the first Congressman to take into consideration the international context of the liberation movement. As the leader of the Congress left wing, he sought to introduce it to socialist ideas.

Jawaharlal Nehru did not name his successor lest to prevent this question from being solved democratically. He never intended to pass power to his daughter. It is not on his initiative that she was elected the INC President in 1959. When in early 1960s suggestions were made that he should make her a member of the government, he refused to do so.

Indira Gandhi, just like her father, came to power not by her birthright but under the Constitution. She repeatedly turned to the electorate for her mandate. She demonstrated respect for democratic principles when she suspended the state of emergency, allowed the electors to resolve the conflict between the Congress and the opposition, and complied with their will. For hundreds of millions of Indians, she was not only the daughter of Nehru but also the mother of India, to use Rajiv Gandhi's phrase. She won her reputation with her energy, privation and commitment.

The allegations about the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, that turned into a weapon of political struggle, collapse under criticism. The Nehrus and the Gandhis are not a "dynasty" but a family of patriots who have made an outstanding contribution to the history of India, the national liberation movement, and the emergence and consolidation of an independent state. The family won recognition by its struggle against colonialism and imperialism, for peace, for India's independence, unity and prosperity, for friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. It came to symbolise dignity, honesty and patriotic commitment to the nation's interests. This explains why, all other conditions being equal, the Indian people gave preference to representatives of this family,

and, in the days of trial, relied on them to ensure the country's stability.

* * *

A correct assessment of Indira Gandhi's role in history requires criteria chosen with reliance on objective reality, rather than subjective will. Those who disapproved of her measures to nationalise banks, abolish princely privileges and expand the public sector accused her of communism. The advocates of the working people's interests accused her of forging anti-popular policies. The opponents of the non-aligned movement accused her, just as they accused her father, of supporting imperialism. Those fearing India's independence of the West accused her of being pro-Soviet. Those apprehensive of the penetration of American capital in the Indian economy, accused her of being pro-American.

She dismissed the latter two accusations, saying that she was "pro-Indian". She was neither pro-Soviet, nor pro-American. She was a consistent nationalist patriot, reformist and centrist. Sometimes she took a left-of-the-centre stand. It is within this framework, one that allowed for further progressive evolution, that her work, contradictions, accomplishments and errors should be evaluated. It is within this framework that she carried on and developed Jawaharlal Nehru's traditions.

For Indira Gandhi, just as for Nehru, true nationalism was inseparable from anti-imperialism. It manifested itself in the struggle to ensure India's sovereignty in political, economic and cultural domains, in the support of the peoples who had not yet liberated themselves from the yoke of colonialism, imperialism, racism and Zionism, be it in Southern Africa, in the Middle East, or Latin America. It manifests itself in the efforts to strengthen the non-aligned movement by resisting imperialist exploitation; in the upholding of the idea of a new economic order; in the struggle against the imperialist policy of military build-up and creating military bases in the Indian Ocean among other places; in the refusal to support the reactionary forces in Asia despite the pressure from the Western powers and the noisy bourgeois propaganda campaigns. Indira Gandhi avoided taking such steps with respect to the West that could hamper India's economic cooperation

with it or receiving economic aid from it. She was never recklessly anti-American. While never resorting to American state loans, she obtained aid for India through the IMF and the IBRD, guarding India, at the same time, against their encroachments on her sovereignty and neutralising, to a degree, their activity by cooperating with socialist countries.

It would be relevant to recall here some of her pronouncements that attest to her understanding of the need for the developing countries to protect their sovereignty against imperialist encroachments and to show solidarity with the peoples fighting for independence.

"The threats to newly independent nations are subtle and varied. There are economic and political pressures. There is a combination of social conservatism and revivalism with external encouragement, strains to preserve an unreal status quo."¹ "But our biggest impediment has been the attitudes of the strong Nations, the kind of terms which they have set for financial outflows to the developing countries and the manner in which the poor nations are shut out from their markets. We can be more effective if we remain united. But it will be difficult for our endeavour to succeed so long as technological neo-colonialism persists."²

In 1974, Indira Gandhi said: "It is true that we feel emotionally about all freedom struggles but, it is not merely a feeling of emotion or heart, it is very much a well thought-out decision... We support freedom struggles because we believe that our own future freedom is bound up with them because we believe that while any country is not free, we ourselves — and in fact people, even those living in the so-called free countries — cannot be truly free."³

Indira Gandhi's sincere anti-imperialist sentiment prompted her to carry on another tradition she inherited from Nehru — friendship with the Soviet Union. The foundation for Hindu-Soviet friendship was laid by Nehru's pioneering efforts in this area. By the time Indira Gandhi took the premier's office, the country had two metallurgical plants and a major machine-building plant built

¹ *The Years of Challenge*, p. 333.

² *Ibid.*, p. 705.

³ *Selected Speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi*, Vol. III, p. 683.

with Soviet help. During her years in office Hindu-Soviet cooperation became unprecedentedly large-scale and comprehensive. It was enshrined in the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1971. Soviet-Indian cooperation covers economy, culture, trade and politics.

Indira Gandhi commented that India was pleased with her friendship with the Soviet Union and proud of it. Having stood the test of time, it offered a reliable support for India in the days of trial. This friendship, Indira Gandhi said, secured for India the economic advantage of having a potential for developing industry, machine-building and trade.

Indira Gandhi was fully aware that friendship with the USSR was in harmony with India's national interests and organically tied up with anti-imperialist struggle. Shortly before her death, in an interview with Marie-France Garaud, a French correspondent from *Géopolitique*, she said that it was the Soviets who supported them. By "them" she meant, she remarked, not only India, but all the developing countries, the Group of 77. There could be no doubt that they were the natural heirs, she said, to the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial tradition shared, probably for different reasons, by the Soviet Union.¹

Campaigning for peace, peaceful coexistence, detente, international trust and mutually beneficial cooperation was another area where Indira Gandhi carried on her father's traditions. As the leader of the non-aligned movement, India, headed by Indira Gandhi, made a weighty contribution to its development as an increasingly important factor in the current uneasy international situation.

To her great credit, Indira Gandhi took vigorous action to ensure India's security in the strenuous conditions that took shape in Hindustan. She was vigilant as regards the unfriendly government of Pakistan, and the ruling circles in Bangladesh who had forgotten about the help rendered to their country by India during the crucial point of its history. She was vigilant as regards the expansionist designs of the imperialist powers. She was aware of the danger of Pakistan's rulers siding with the

¹ See *Le Monde*, 15 novembre 1984, p. 4.

US militarists. She warned the Indian people about the danger.

In her home policy, Indira Gandhi gave priority to preserving India's unity. She protected this unity with great determination regarding it as the basis of independence and progress. She defended the principles of the Indian federation grounded on strong central power and fought back the efforts to replace it with an unstable alliance of states and territories which could only lead to the fragmentation of the great Asian state. In defending India's territorial integrity, Indira Gandhi was alien to communalism in any of its manifestations. Following Nehru's behests, she upheld full equality and fraternity of all religious and national communities.

In 1958 answering the question about India's greatest problem, Jawaharlal Nehru said that the country's greatest difficulty was feeding its entire population. Twenty-six years later, when the country was able to provide itself with its own grain, Indira Gandhi answered a similar question from a French reporter by saying that to urge the country's population to live together was the greatest of all tasks.

An important principle of Indira Gandhi's economic policy, inherited from Nehru, was a reliance on the public sector. Indira Gandhi succeeded in rebuffing the attacks of its enemies and in strengthening the public sector as the most important element of the national economy which not only had proved to be viable and profitable, but also turned into a major lever of socio-economic change. The public sector is the basis of the country's production forces and a stimulus for its scientific and technological thought.

Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were supportive of the so-called mixed economy, the essence of which consists in combining public and large-, medium- and small-scale private capitalist entrepreneurship. They stressed the importance of the development of the public sector believing that in the course of time both types of entrepreneurship would merge as a result of reform and form the foundation for the "socialist pattern of society". This idea was programmatic for the economic policy conducted by the INC throughout the years following the proclamation of India's independence. This idea can be traced to the mid-1930s.

The public sector proved to be viable and able to promote India's industrialisation. As for private enterprise, it was also developing at a rather high rate consolidating large- and medium-scale businesses. Small-scale private enterprise, too, developed with equal success.

One may disagree with those who believe Indira Gandhi's domestic policy to have run counter to the interests of the people. It is obvious, however, that her internal social policies were somewhat limited. In this respect, Indira Gandhi shared the fate of the Congress, which, while relying on the masses and retaining the right to represent the nation, was predominantly tied up with Indian national capitalism, with middle bourgeois strata, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. One has to bear in mind that the process of class formation in Indian society is far from being distinct and complete. Class differentiation both in rural and urban areas is still indistinct. The same is true of the large groups of industrial and rural proletariat. This explains why, for all her feeling for the masses and her understanding of their condition, for all her preparedness to share and alleviate their sufferings, Indira Gandhi did not venture to undertake serious socio-economic reforms. To some extent, she was following her father's traditions. She said that "the problems of growth ... can be solved only in a positive manner, which looks essentially to an enlargement of resources and opportunities rather than the redistribution for its own sake."¹ Nehru once said that the task was not to "redistribute" poverty but to create wealth. This cannot be seen as a serious and indisputable substantiation of his socio-economic programme. No level of development, no level of poverty can remove the question of social justice and progress for the working people from the national agenda. It would be important to see, however, to what degree, in what forms redistribution is carried out and when it is economically expedient. It is true that haste and lack of balance in redistribution may undermine economic growth. But it is also true that if conducted properly, it can provide a powerful economic and social impetus for progress.

Nehru justified his policy by the need for a transitional period. He never identified its social content or duration.

¹ *The Years of Challenge*, p. 128.

Therefore, as the social contradictions grew more acute, this justification became less and less convincing. It goes without saying that Indira Gandhi failed to use all the available potential to effect social change and drastically improve the living standards of the masses. She failed to implement her own programme. As a result, the number of the poor grew, the country was ravaged by social inequalities, trade and industrial monopolies multiplied, unemployment soared, agrarian overpopulation and inflation were on the ascent.

Indira Gandhi tended to advance programmes for social reforms at all crucial points of political struggle or in periods of crisis. This was the case in the late 1960s and in 1975. As was indicated by an Indian author, the Ten Point Programme served as a "political weapon with which she worsted the 'syndicate'".¹ The Twenty Point Programme lay in the basis of the pre-election struggle of the Congress (I) Party in 1980.

The journalist Vishnu Dutt entitled his book about Indira Gandhi published in 1980 *Indira Gandhi. Promises to Keep*. The title referred the reader to a poem by Robert Frost that was Nehru's favourite. It sounded like the public's instructions to Indira Gandhi as she returned to the position of power. The instructions are valid for her successors, too. From the long-term viewpoint, the Congress (I) Party has the most reliable reserves for strengthening its influence in the implementation of its social programmes.

The Indian National Congress won an impressive victory at the December 1984 general elections to the House of the People. If before the elections, the INC held two-thirds of parliamentary seats, after the elections it disposed of almost 80 per cent of them. Significantly, the bourgeois opposition parties which strove to cause serious damage to the government and even to remove it, suffered a crushing defeat at the Parliamentary elections. The three main right-wing opposition parties had 601 names on their ballot. Only 14 of them were elected against the 69 which the parties had pushed through in the former Parliament. This means that they had five times less representatives.

Tens of millions of Indian voters came out in favour

¹ Vishnu Dutt, *Indira Gandhi. Promises to Keep*, p. 143.

of continuing the Nehru-Gandhi course. Voting for the Congress (I) Party, they realised that they were upholding the country's unity and territorial integrity, supporting planned economic development with priority given to the public sector, promoting the implementation of socio-economic reforms in the interests of the poor and fostering India's independent, peace-loving and anti-imperialist foreign policy. This was in harmony with the political line of the new government as proclaimed in the Congress's election manifesto and with the essence of its programmes and slogans.

Both India's adversaries and the pessimists tend to exaggerate the country's weaknesses. The French author Raoul Bertrand wrote in his article published in *Le Monde* on November 8, 1984, and sensationally entitled "Un sous-continent sans espoir" that India was not a nation, not a state, not a true democracy, but a conglomeration of prejudices, myths and symbols scattered against a background of ignorance and poverty with which Hinduism, powerless to remedy them, taught the nation to reconcile. What an absurd and irresponsible assessment.

India is a great nation and a great state, a state that has accomplished a tremendous, progressive leap forward over the years of independence and is ranking among the world's leading ten industrial countries. It is a country capable of providing food to its population of 800,000,000, of harnessing nuclear energy, flying in space, strengthening ties among its various regions, peoples and communities through the expansion of its domestic market, infrastructure, agriculture and industry. It is a state that enjoys authority throughout the world, has reliable allies and is prepared to defend its national interests. Indira Gandhi, a prominent state leader who headed the vast country for almost 20 years, played an important role in all these positive changes.

The country's present Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has inherited from his mother Indira Gandhi major accomplishments, time-tested principles and, at the same time, a host of difficulties and outstanding problems. The friends of India hope to see him as a worthy successor to the course of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi and a person loyal to the glorious traditions of the Indian national liberation movement and prepared to creatively elaborate and innovate them.

It would be interesting to see the way India will be in the 21st century. Over the forty years of independence, India has grown stronger. The economy confined solely to farm produce and raw material, a prey to British colonialism, has become a thing of the past. Today India is an agrarian-industrial country about to turn, hopefully within the first 25 years of the 21st century, into an industrial-agrarian nation and thus accomplish a great qualitative leap forward.

Yet, its social, economic and spiritual life, especially as concerns her vast rural population of over 500,000,000, is still plagued with the vestiges of the tribal, patriarchal, feudal order of things. She has embarked upon a new road of development at the cost of incredible efforts. Advancing along this road is not an easy matter. It requires firm leadership, national unity, great vigilance and determination to overcome enormous difficulties. The main difficulty has been done away with, however India is able to feed its 800,000,000 inhabitants. Millions of its people are no longer dying of hunger. Moreover, assisted by socialist countries, it has laid the foundation of heavy industry, machine-building, fuel and energy production. It has learned to make machinery with the help of machinery. This is a sign of economic and technological maturity.

Soviet people of my generation are happy to follow the events beyond the Hymalayas and see that the Indian nation has revived and is developing independently.

Rajiv Gandhi, the leader of India today, is facing formidable tasks. Ranking first among them is ensuring peace and preserving the integrity of the Indian state. The Delhi Declaration, signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi, on the work to create a non-violent, nuclear-free world, expand cooperation in the area of disarmament, ensure the survival of humankind, strengthen mutually advantageous trade and economic ties with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and to promote the non-aligned movement in which India has a prominent role to play, as well as the substantive initiative of six states designed to foster peace and achieve arms reductions, are sincerely welcomed and

supported by millions of people as an important guarantee of universal peace.

If I, the oldest Soviet Indologist, who happened to meet Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter on many occasions, were asked what my wishes for India are, I would say that I wish it a lasting international peace, national unity to benefit the dozens of her ethnic groups, and every success in securing social justice for her working people.

I am sure that these wishes are in full harmony with the aspirations of the great Indian people.

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ISBN 5-01-002007-6

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